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THE OLD TESTAMENT OMNIBUS BOOK

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THE GREAT STORIES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT
AND THE APOCRYPHA

Collected and Arranged by
A. C. HANNAY

With an Introduction by
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G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
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EDITOR'S NOTE

IN these stories the words of the Authorised Version have been used throughout, except where in a few cases phrases or words from the Revised Version and from the marginal notes of the Authorised Version have been used to make the meaning clearer. Balaam's blessings of Israel and Jonah's prayer from the belly of the whale also have been taken from the Revised Version. Modern punctuation and paragraphing and inverted commas have been used. To relieve the monotony of the constant use of the words "and he said unto him" the modern plan of arranging dialogue has been adopted. A good many "ands" and "It came to pass thats" have been deleted. Personal names have been inserted where the pronouns become difficult to follow, and the stories have, in some cases, been pieced together from several chapters. The sole object of the editing throughout has been to make the stories easy for the modern reader. As many stories as possible have been included, but it was obviously impossible to include everything, and it is hoped that this book will encourage readers to go to the Bible itself for the many fine stories that have been omitted. It must be pointed out that this book is not especially intended for children, and the stories have not been edited from that point of view.

I should like here to place on record my deep and lasting gratitude to Mr. E. L. Skinner for all his advice, help, and enthusiasm, and all the hard work he has put into the making of this book, and also to Miss Phyllis James for her long and patient toil upon it.

A. C. H.

INTRODUCTION

THE desire for stories is a natural appetite in man. Novelists, whose business it is to tell stories, often forget this, which is unfortunate both for them and for their readers. What we all want is good stories, well told, and no amount of psychology, however subtle, or "art" will compensate for the lack of interest in the tale itself. Children, from a very early age, clamour for stories and apparently men, in the age of the childhood of the race, also clamoured for the same thing. Perhaps the cave-dwellers told stories in the evenings, round their fires. If they did, their stories must have been of two kinds: adventure stories, told by the men who had been out hunting or fighting, and domestic stories, of love and common life and fairies, told by the women who stayed at home. Broadly speaking, all stories, ever told, belong to one class or the other, though sometimes the types get mixed—a love-story, for instance, may have a lot of adventure in it—and accurate classification is impossible.

We have not got any of the cave-dwellers' stories, for the poor people, though they could draw, could not write, so their stories were lost, or, if they survive, as they may in altered forms, can no longer be attributed with any certainty to the cave-dwellers. But we have got many very early stories, like those of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, or, earlier still, some of the Hebrew stories preserved for us in the Old Testament. It is odd, and perhaps a little depressing, to realize how little the art of story-telling has improved. Even the most modern of all kinds of story, the detective story, has improved very little on its earliest models. Mr. Sherlock Holmes, Lord Peter Wimsey, and Dr. Thorndyke take longer over their business, and make a greater display of learning and intelligence, but they have scarcely improved at all on Daniel's

methods in proving the innocence of Susannah or exposing the trickery of the priests in Bel and the Dragon. Is there a better "Vamp" story anywhere than that of Samson? And the "Vamp" story is one of those kinds which never stale, corresponding as it does to human experience in every age. The Absalom story—which we should now call a long short story, for it is scarcely a full-length novel—has all the elements of great tragedy: lust, ambition, loyalty, treachery, battle, death, and triumph. It works up to a climax of breathless intensity. It ends on a note of calm. What would a publisher to-day give for a story on such a theme told even half as well? It would be, to use the current phrase, a "certain winner," a best-seller which would run into edition after edition.

Yet we do not read these stories. Why not? Even men, otherwise well read in the world's literature, seem to have little or no knowledge of them. Why?

I leave out of consideration for the moment the great stories of classical mythology. The neglect of those is probably part of the general reaction against Latin and Greek, so long considered the ground-work of all good education. The proletarian dislike of the classics may account for our no longer knowing anything about Medea, but it is no reason for our equal ignorance of the stories of Jezebel. For that we must find some other cause. Nor is it very far to seek. The best of these old stories, perhaps the best of all stories, either old or new, are in that part of the Bible which we call the Old Testament, and most people no longer read the Bible.

Once men did read it. Our grandfathers knew it well, but they read it in a spirit of faith in the inspiration of the English words which is quite impossible for us. The criticism of recent years has destroyed that, and men, discovering that the Bible had not the particular value which their fathers supposed,

leaped to the conclusion that it had no value at all, and stopped reading it. There never was a profounder mistake. Criticism has enhanced, not destroyed, the spiritual value of the book. It means more to us because we understand it better, or would mean more to us if we had not stopped reading it.

But it is not with the Bible as the word of God—a lantern to men's feet and a light unto their paths—that this introduction is concerned. Such deep matters are better left to those who have devoted their lives to them. All that is attempted by this book is to give to modern readers the splendid stories of the Old Testament in a form which will not repel by its strangeness, to present them for what they are, masterpieces in the great art of story-telling.

G. A. B.

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THE OLD TESTAMENT OMNIBUS BOOK

IN THE BEGINNING

i. ADAM AND EVE

THE Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. Out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. A river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold, and the gold of that land is good; there is bdellium and the onyx stone. The name of the second river is Gihon, the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. The name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth towards the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates.

The Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it, and to keep it; and commanded the man saying, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto

Adam to see what he would call them, and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

And the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him an help meet for him." And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and he slept. He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

Adam said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh." They were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made, and he said unto the woman, "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"

"We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden," said the woman, "but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, 'Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.' "

"Ye shall not surely die," the serpent said; "for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened and they knew that

they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day; and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.

And the Lord God called unto Adam, "Where art thou?"

And Adam said, "I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself."

"Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?"

"The woman whom thou gavest me to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat."

And the Lord God said unto the woman, "What is this that thou hast done?"

And the woman said, "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat."

The Lord God said unto the serpent, "Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field. Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." And unto the woman he said, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception. In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." And unto Adam he said, "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee saying, 'Thou shalt not eat of it,' cursed is the ground for thy sake. In sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou

eat bread, till thou return unto the ground, for out of it wast thou taken, for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living. Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skin, and clothed them.

And the Lord said, "Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil." And, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever; therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

GENESIS ii. 7 to end, iii.

2. CAIN AND ABEL

Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, "I have gotten a man from the Lord." And she again bare his brother Abel. Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. In process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord; and Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering, but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

The Lord said unto Cain, "Why art thou wroth? And why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him."

And Cain talked with Abel his brother, and it came to

pass when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and slew him.

The Lord said unto Cain, "Where is Abel thy brother?"
"I know not. Am I my brother's keeper?"

And the Lord said, "What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. Now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength. A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth."

And Cain said unto the Lord, "My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth, and from thy face shall I be hid. I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me."

"Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold," the Lord said unto him. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him. And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the East of Eden.

GENESIS iv. 1-16

3. THE FLOOD

It came to pass when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every

imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth and it grieved him at his heart, and the Lord said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them."

But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God. And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.

And God said unto Noah, "The end of all flesh is come before me, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make thee an ark of gopher wood. Rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. This is the fashion which thou shalt make it of. The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof. With lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it. And behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherin is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die. But with thee will I establish my covenant. Thou shalt come into the ark, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee. And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female. Of fowls after their kind, and

of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive. And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them."

Thus did Noah, according to all that God commanded him, so did he.

Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth. And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth. The same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were open, and the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.

In the selfsame day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark; they, and every beast after his kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind, and every fowl after his kind, every bird of every sort. They went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life; and they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and the Lord shut him in.

The flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth. The waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters. The waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills that were under the whole heaven were covered. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered. All flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man. All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the

dry land, died. Every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth; and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark. And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days.

God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark; and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters asswaged. The fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained. The waters returned from off the earth continually and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated. And the ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat.

The waters decreased continually until the tenth month. In the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen. At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made, and he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth. Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground, but the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth. Then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark. He stayed yet another seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark. The dove came in to him in the evening, and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf pluckt off, so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth. He stayed yet other seven days, and sent forth the dove, which returned not again unto him any more. And it came to pass the waters were dried up from off the earth, and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry.

And God spake unto Noah, "Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee. Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth."

Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him. Every beast, every creeping thing, and every fowl, and whatsoever creepeth upon the earth, after their kinds, went forth out of the ark. And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savour, and the Lord said in his heart, "I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."

And God spake unto Noah and to his sons with him, saying,

"Behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; and with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth. I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth. This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And when I bring a cloud over the earth, the bow shall be

seen in the cloud. And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth."

GENESIS vi., vii. 6 to end, viii., ix. 8 to 16

A B R A H A M

1. SODOM AND GOMORRAH

TERAH took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter-in-law his son Abram's wife, and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran and dwelt there, and Terah died in Haran.

Now the Lord had said unto Abram, "Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee, and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great and thou shalt be a blessing. I will bless them that bless thee and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him, and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.

Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold, and he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning between Bethel and Hai. Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds and tents; and the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together, for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together. And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle, and Abram said unto Lot, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herd-

men and thy herdmen, for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me. If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left."

And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east; and they separated themselves the one from the other. Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly, and the Lord said, "Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great and because their sin is very grievous, I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know."

But Abraham¹ stood before the Lord, and drew near, and said, "Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city; wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked, and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee. Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?"

"If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes," said the Lord.

"Behold now," Abraham answered, "I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes. Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous; wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five?"

"If I find there forty and five I will not destroy it."

¹ See next story for the change of name from Abram to Abraham.

And he spake unto him yet again, "Peradventure there shall be forty found there."

"I will not do it for forty's sake."

"Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: peradventure there shall thirty be found there."

And the Lord said, "I will not do it if I find thirty there."

And Abraham said, "Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord; peradventure there shall be twenty found there."

"I will not destroy it for twenty's sake."

"Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once, peradventure ten shall be found there."

"I will not destroy it for ten's sake." And the Lord went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham, and Abraham returned unto his place.

And there came two angels to Sodom at even, and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom, and seeing them rose up to meet them. He bowed himself with his face toward the ground, and said, "Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways."

"Nay," they said, "but we will abide in the street all night."

He pressed upon them greatly, and they turned into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat. But, before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter, and they called unto Lot, "Where are the men which came in to thee this night? Bring them out unto us, that we may know them."

And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him, and said, "I pray you, brethren, do not so

wickedly. Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes; only unto these men do nothing, for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof."

And they said, "Stand back. This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge. Now will we deal worse with thee than with them." And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door, but the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door. And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they wearied themselves to find the door.

"Hast thou here any besides?" the men said unto Lot. "Son-in-law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place, for we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord. The Lord hath sent us to destroy it."

And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons-in-law, which married his daughters, "Up, get you out of this place, for the Lord will destroy this city." But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law.

When the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, "Arise, take thy wife and thy two daughters, which are here, lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city." And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters—the Lord being merciful unto him... and they brought him forth, and set him without the city. And when they had brought them forth abroad, he said, "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain, escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed."

"Oh! not so, my lord," Lot said. "Behold now, thy servant

hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast showed unto me in saving my life; I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die. Behold now, this city is near to flee unto and it is a little one. Oh! let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live."

And he said unto Lot, "See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken. Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do anything till thou be come thither."

Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar. The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar. Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven. He overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.

But Lot's wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the Lord, and he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.

GENESIS xi. 31-2, xii. 1-5, xiii. 2, 5-13, xviii. 20 to end, xix. 1-28

2. "THE LORD WILL PROVIDE"

Now Sarai, Abram's wife, bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar.

"Behold now," Sarai said unto Abram, "the Lord hath restrained me from bearing. I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her." And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai; and he went in unto Hagar,

and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.

"My wrong be upon thee," said Sarai unto Abram; "I have given my maid into thy bosom: and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes. The Lord , judge between me and thee."

"Behold, thy maid is in thy hand," said Abram, "do to her as it pleaseth thee."

And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, Hagar fled from her face. And the angel of the Lord found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur, and he said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? And whither wilt thou go?"

"I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai," she said.

And the angel of the Lord said unto her, "Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands. I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the Lord hath heard thy affliction. He will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren." And Hagar bare Abram a son: and Abram called his son's name, which Hagar bare, Ishmael.

When Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to him and said, "I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her:

yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her."

Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, "Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? And shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?" and he said unto God, "O that Ishmael might live before thee!"

And God said, "Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac; and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. As for Ishmael I have heard thee. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year." And he left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.

The Lord appeared unto Abraham in the plains of Mamre. He sat in the tent door in the heat of the day, and he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him. When he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground, and said, "My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant. Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on, for therefore are ye come to your servant."

"So do, as thou hast said."

Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, "Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth." And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man, and he hasted to dress it. He took butter,

and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.

"Where is Sarah thy wife?" they said.

"Behold, in the tent."

And the Lord said, "I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son." And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him. Now Sarah and Abraham were old and well stricken in age; therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, "After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?"

The Lord said unto Abraham, "Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old?' Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son."

Then Sarah denied, saying, "I laughed not," for she was afraid.

"Nay; but thou didst laugh," said the Lord; and the men rose up from thence, and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way.

And the Lord visited Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did unto Sarah as he had spoken, for Sarah conceived and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him; and Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac. "God hath made me to laugh," said Sarah, "so that all that hear will laugh with me. Who would have said unto Abraham that Sarah should have given children suck? For I have born him a son in his old age."

The child grew, and was weaned, and Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned. And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born

unto Abraham, mocking. Wherefore she said unto Abraham, "Cast out this bond-woman, and her son. The son of this bond-woman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac."

The thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son, and God said unto Abraham, "Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bond-woman. In all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called. And also of the son of the bond-woman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed."

Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away, and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beer-sheba. The water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs, and she went and sat her down over against him a good way off, as it were a bow-shot; for she said, "Let me not see the death of the child." And she sat over against him, and lift up her voice and wept.

And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, "What aileth thee, Hagar? Fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand, for I will make him a great nation." And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink. And God was with the lad, and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer.

After these things God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, "Abraham."

"Behold, here I am."

And God said, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah;

and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."

And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son. He clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off, and he said unto his young men, "Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you."

Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son. He took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and they went both of them together, and Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, "My father."

"Here am I, my son."

"Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"

"My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering."

So they went both of them together, and they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood, and Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!"

"Here am I."

"Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him, for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me."

And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. And the angel of the

Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is upon the sea shore. Thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice."

So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beer-sheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beer-sheba.

GENESIS XVI. 1-12, 15, XVII. 1-5, 15-22, XVIII. 1-16, XXI. 1-20, XXII. 1-19

3. THE WOOING OF REBEKAH

Abraham was old, and well stricken in age; and the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things. And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, "Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of Heaven, and the God of earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell; but thou shalt go unto my country and to my kindred and take a wife unto my son Isaac."

"Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land. Must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest?" said the servant.

"Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again. The Lord God of Heaven which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, 'Unto thy seed

will I give this land,' he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence. And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath; only bring not my son thither again."

And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning that matter; and he took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed (for all the goods of his master were in his hands). He arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor, and he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water.

And he said, "O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water, and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water. Let it come to pass, that the damsels to whom I shall say, 'Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink'; and she shall say, 'Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also': let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewn kindness unto my master."

Before he had done speaking, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder. The damsels was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up, and the servant ran to meet her and said, "Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher."

"Drink, my lord," she said, and she hastened, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink; and when she had done giving him drink, she said, "I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking." And she

hasted and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels.

The man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the Lord had made his journey prosperous or not. And as the camels had done drinking, the man took a golden ear-ring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands, of ten shekels weight of gold; and said, "Whose daughter art thou? Tell me, I pray thee, is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in?"

"I am the daughter of Bethuel. We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in."

And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the Lord; and said, "Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth. I being in the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren." And the damsels ran, and told them of her mother's house these things.

Rebekah had a brother, and his name was Laban: and Laban ran out unto the man, unto the well. And when he saw the ear-ring and bracelets upon his sister's hands, and heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, "Thus spake the man unto me," he came unto the man; and behold, he stood by the camels at the well. And Laban said, "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord. Wherefore standest thou without? I have prepared the house, and room for the camels."

And the man came unto the house, and Laban ungirded his camels, and gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet, and the men's feet that were with him. And there was set meat before him to eat; but he said, "I will not eat, until I have told mine errand."

"Speak on."

"I am Abraham's servant. The Lord hath blessed my master greatly, and he is become great. He hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and menservants, and maid-

servants, and camels, and asses. And Sarah my master's wife bare a son to my master when she was old; and unto him hath he given all that he hath. My master made me swear, saying, 'Thou shalt not take a wife to my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell; but thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son.' And I said unto my master, 'Peradventure the woman will not follow me,' and he said unto me, 'The Lord, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way, and thou shalt take a wife for my son of my kindred, and of my father's house. Then shalt thou be clear from this my oath, when thou comest to my kindred, and if they give not thee one, thou shalt be clear from thy oath.' And I came this day unto the well, and said, 'O Lord God of my master, Abraham, if now thou do prosper my way which I go, behold I stand by the well of water; and it shall come to pass, that when the virgin cometh forth to draw water, and I say to her, 'Give me, I pray thee, a little water of thy pitcher to drink,' and she say to me, 'Both drink thou and I will also draw for thy camels,' let the same be the woman whom the Lord hath appointed out for my master's son.' And before I had done speaking in mine heart, behold, Rebekah came forth with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down unto the well, and drew water; and I said unto her, 'Let me drink, I pray thee.' And she made haste and let down her pitcher from her shoulder, and said, 'Drink and I will give thy camels drink also': so I drank, and she made the camels drink also. And I asked her, and said, 'Whose daughter art thou?' And she said, 'The daughter of Bethuel.' I put the ear-ring upon her face, and the bracelets upon her hands, and I bowed down my head, and worshipped the Lord, and blessed the Lord God of my master Abraham, which had led me in the right way to take my master's brother's daughter unto his son. Now if ye

will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left."

Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, "The thing proceedeth from the Lord. We cannot speak unto thee bad or good. Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the Lord hath spoken."

When Abraham's servant heard their words, he worshipped the Lord, bowing himself to the earth, and he brought forth jewels of silver and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah; he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things. And they did eat and drink, he and the men that were with him, and tarried all night. They rose up in the morning, and he said, "Send me away unto my master."

And her brother and her mother said, "Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten; after that she shall go."

And he said unto them, "Hinder me not, seeing the Lord hath prospered my way. Send me away that I may go to my master."

"We will call the damsel, and enquire at her mouth," they said, and they called Rebekah, and said unto her, "Wilt thou go with this man?"

And she said, "I will go."

They sent away Rebekah their sister, and her nurse, and Abraham's servant, and his men, and they blessed Rebekah and said, "Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them." And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man; and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way.

Isaac came from the way of the well Lahai-roi; for he dwelt in the south country. He went out to meditate in the

field at eventide, and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac she lighted off the camel. For she had said unto the servant, "What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us?" And the servant had said, "It is my master"; therefore she took a veil, and covered herself.

The servant told Isaac all things that he had done, and Isaac brought her unto his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her. And Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

GENESIS XXIV.

J A C O B

I. JACOB AND ESAU

ISAAC was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife. And Isaac entreated the Lord for his wife, because she was barren; and the Lord was entreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived, and when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold there were twins in her womb. The first came forth red, all over like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau; and after that came his brother forth, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob.

The boys grew. Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents. And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison; but Rebekah loved Jacob.

Jacob sod pottage and Esau came from the field, and he was faint, and he said to Jacob, "Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint."

"Sell me this day thy birthright," Jacob said.

"Behold I am at the point to die, and what profit shall this birthright do to me?"

"Swear to me this day," said Jacob, and Esau sware unto him, and sold his birthright unto Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

And it came to pass when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, that he called Esau his eldest son, and said unto him, "My son."

"Behold, here am I."

"Behold now, I am old," said Isaac. "I know not the day

of my death. Now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me some venison. Make me savoury meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat, that my soul may bless thee before I die."

And Rebekah heard when Isaac spake to Esau his son; and Esau went to the field to hunt for venison, and to bring it. And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son, saying, "Behold I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother saying, 'Bring me venison, and make me savoury meat, that I may eat, and bless thee before the Lord before my death.' Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee. Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats; and I will make them savoury meat for thy father, such as he loveth. And thou shalt bring it to thy father, that he may eat, and that he may bless thee before his death."

And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, "Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man. My father peradventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing."

"Upon me be thy curse, my son; only obey my voice, and go fetch me them."

He went, and fetched, and brought them to his mother: and his mother made savoury meat, such as his father loved. And Rebekah took goodly raiment of her eldest son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them upon Jacob her younger son. She put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck. She gave the savoury meat and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hands of her son Jacob; and he came unto his father and said, "My father."

"Here am I; who art thou, my son?"

And Jacob said unto his father, "I am Esau thy first-born, I have done according as thou badest me. Arise I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me."

"How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son?"

"Because the Lord thy God brought it to me."

"Come here, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be my very son Esau or not."

Jacob went near unto his father, and he felt him, and said, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau." And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands. So he blessed him.

And Isaac said, "Art thou my very son Esau?"

"I am."

"Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son's venison, that my soul may bless thee."

And Jacob brought it near to him, and he did eat, and he brought him wine, and he drank. And his father Isaac said unto him, "Come near now, and kiss me, my son."

And Jacob came near, and kissed him, and Isaac smelt the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, "See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed; therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine. Let people serve thee and nations bow down to thee. Be Lord over thy brethren and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee. Cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee."

As soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, Esau his brother came in from his hunting. He also had made savoury meat, and brought it unto his father, and said unto his father, "Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me."

And Isaac his father said unto him, "Who art thou?"

"I am thy son, thy first-born, Esau."

Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, "Who? Where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before you camest, and have blessed him? Yea, and he shall be blessed."

When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry unto his father, "Bless me, even me also, O my father!"

And Isaac said, "Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy blessing."

"Is not he rightly named Jacob?" said Esau, "for he hath supplanted me these two times. He took away my birth-right; and, behold now he hath taken away my blessing. Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?"

And Isaac answered and said unto Esau, "Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants, and with corn and wine have I sustained him. And what shall I do now unto thee, my son?"

"Hast thou but one blessing, my father? Bless me even me also, O my father!" And Esau lifted up his voice and wept.

And Isaac his father answered unto him, "Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above. By thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck."

Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him; and Esau said in his heart, "The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob."

These words of Esau, her elder son, were told to Rebekah; and she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said, "Behold thy brother, Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, purposing to kill thee. Now, therefore, my son,

obey my voice. Arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran; and tarry with him a few days, until thy brother's fury turn away, until thy brother's anger turn away from thee, and he forget that which thou hast done to him. Then I will send, and fetch thee from thence. Why should I be deprived also of you both in one day?"

And Rebekah said to Isaac, "I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth. If Jacob takes a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?"

And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, "Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Padan-aram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother. God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people; and give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham." And Isaac sent away Jacob.

GENESIS xxv. 20 to end, xxvii, xxviii. 1-4

2. JACOB AND RACHEL

Jacob went out from Beer-sheba and went toward Haran. He lighted upon a certain place and tarried there all night because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold! the angels of God, ascending and descending on it; and behold! the Lord stood above it, and said, "I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac. The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed.

Thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the West, and to the East, and to the North, and to the South; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of."

And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place and I knew it not." And he was afraid and said, "How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." And he rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it, and he called the name of the place Beth-el.

And Jacob vowed a vow, "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God. And this stone which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee."

Then Jacob went on his journey, and came into the land of the people of the East. And he looked, and behold, a well in the field, and lo, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it (for out of that well they watered the flocks), and a great stone was upon the well's mouth. Thither were all the flocks gathered, and they rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the sheep, and put the stone again upon the well's mouth in his place. And Jacob said unto them, "My brethren, whence be ye?"

"Of Haran are we," they said.

"Know ye Laban the son of Nahor?"

"We know him."

unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her. And Jacob said unto Laban, "Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled that I may go in unto her."

Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast, and in the evening he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him; and Jacob went in unto her. And it came to pass, that in the morning behold, it was Leah. And Jacob said to Laban. "What is this that thou hast done unto me? Did not I serve with thee for Rachel? Wherefore then hast thou beguiled me?"

"It must not be so done in our country," Laban said, "to give the younger before the first-born. Fulfil her week, and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years."

And Jacob did so, and Laban gave him Rachel his daughter to wife also. And Jacob went in also unto Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah, and served with Laban yet seven other years.

GENESIS xxviii. 10 to end, xxix. 1-30

3. THE RETURN OF JACOB

It came to pass that when Rachel had born Joseph, that Jacob said unto Laban, "Send me away, that I may go unto mine own place, and to my country. Give me my wives and my children, for whom I have served thee, and let me go, for thou knowest my service which I have done thee."

"I pray thee," Laban said, "if I have found favour in thine eyes, tarry, for I have learned by experience that the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake." And he said, "Appoint me thy wages, and I will give it."

"Thou knowest how I have served thee, and how thy cattle was with me; for it was little which thou hadst before I came, and it is now increased into a multitude, and the

Lord hath blessed thee since my coming. And now when shall I provide for mine own house also?"

"What shall I give thee?" Laban said.

"Thou shalt not give me anything," said Jacob. "If thou wilt do this thing for me, I will again feed and keep thy flock. I will pass through all thy flock to-day, removing from thence all the speckled and spotted cattle, and all the brown cattle among the sheep, and the spotted and speckled among the goats. Of such shall be my hire."

"Behold, I would it might be according to thy word," said Laban.

Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him; and when Jacob saw them, he said, "This is God's host," and he called the name of that place Mahanaim. And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom, and he commanded them saying: "Thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau, 'Thy servant Jacob saith thus, I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed there until now. I have oxen, and asses, flocks, and men servants, and women servants; and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in thy sight.' "

The messengers returned to Jacob saying, "We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him."

Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed. He divided the people that was with him, and the flocks and herds, and the camels, into two bands; and said, "If Esau came to the one company, and smite it, then the other company that is left shall escape."

And Jacob said, "O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which saidst unto me, 'Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee,' I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy

servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two hands. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. And thou saidst, 'I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.' "

He lodged there that same night, and took of that which came to his hand a present for Esau his brother—two hundred she-goats, and twenty he-goats, two hundred ewes, and twenty rams, thirty milch camels with their colts, forty kine, and ten bulls, twenty she-asses and ten foals. He delivered them into the hand of his servants, every drove by themselves; and said unto his servants, "Pass over before me, and put a space betwixt drove and drove." And he commanded the foremost, "When Esau my brother meeteth thee, and asketh thee saying, 'Whose art thou? And whither goest thou? And whose are these before thee?' Then shalt thou say, 'They be thy servant Jacob's. It is a present sent unto my lord Esau; and behold also, he is behind us.' "

And so commanded he the second, and the third, and all that followed the droves, "On this manner shall ye speak unto Esau, when ye find him. And say ye moreover, 'Behold, thy servant Jacob is behind us.' " For he said, "I will appease him with the present that goeth before me, and afterward I will see his face; peradventure he will accept of me."

So went the present over before him; and himself lodged that night in the company. And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two women servants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok; and he took them, and sent them over the brook, and sent over that he had.

Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he

prevailed not against Jacob, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint as he wrestled with him, and he said, "Let me go, for the day breaketh."

And Jacob said, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me."

"What is thy name?"

"Jacob."

"Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel, for as a Prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed."

And Jacob asked him and said, "Tell me, I pray thee, thy name."

"Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name?" And he blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel "for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved"; and as he passed over Penuel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh.

And Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked; and, behold, Esau came, and with him four hundred men. Jacob divided the children unto Leah, and unto Rachel, and unto the two handmaids. He put the handmaids and their children foremost, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph hindermost; and he passed over before them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.

Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him and fell on his neck, and kissed him; and they wept. And Esau lifted up his eyes and saw the women and the children, and said, "Who are those with thee?"

"The children which God hath graciously given thy servant," Jacob said.

Then the handmaidens came near, they and their children, and they bowed themselves; and Leah also with her children

came near and bowed themselves; and after came Joseph near and Rachel, and they bowed themselves.

And Esau said, "What meanest thou by all this drove which I met?"

"These are to find grace in the sight of my lord," said Jacob.

And Esau said, "I have enough, my brother; keep that thou hast unto thyself."

"Nay, I pray thee," Jacob said, "if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand. For therefore I have seen thy face, as though I have seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me. Take, I pray thee, my blessing that is brought to thee; because God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough." And he urged him, and he took it.

"Let us take our journey," said Esau, "and let us go and I will go before thee."

"My lord knoweth that the children are tender," Jacob said, "and the flocks and herds with young are with me; and if the men should over-drive them one day, all the flock will die. Let my lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant, and I will lead on softly according as the cattle that goeth before me and the children be able to endure, until I come unto my lord, unto Seir."

And Esau said, "Let me now leave with thee some of the people that are with me."

"What needeth it?" said Jacob. "Let me now find grace in the sight of my lord."

So Esau returned that day on his way unto Seir, and Jacob journeyed to Succoth.

GENESIS xxx. 25-34, xxxii. 1-32, xxxiii. 1-16

J O S E P H

I. "BEHOLD THIS DREAMER"

Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a coat of many colours. And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him. And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren, and they hated him yet the more. "Hear, I pray you," he said, "this dream which I have dreamed. Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright, and, behold, your sheaves stood round about and made obeisance to my sheaf."

"Shalt thou indeed reign over us? Or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us?" his brethren said to him, and they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.

And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren. "Behold, I have dreamed a dream more. Behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me." And he told it to his father, and to his brethren; and his father rebuked him. "What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?" And his brethren envied him, but his father observed the saying.

His brethren went to feed their father's flock in Shechem, and Israel said unto Joseph, "Do not thy brethren feed the flock in Shechem? Come and I will send thee unto them."

"Here am I," said Joseph.

And Jacob said, "Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again."

So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he went to Shechem. And a certain man found him, and because he was wandering in the field. And the man asked him, saying, "What seekest thou?"

"I seek my brethren. Tell me, I pray thee, where feed their flocks."

"They are departed hence," said the man, "for I have heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" And Joseph went to his brethren, and found them in Dothan.

When they saw him afar off, even before he came unto them, they conspired against him to slay him, and one said to another, "Behold this dreamer cometh! Come therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some hole, and we will say, 'Some evil beast hath devoured him': we shall see what will become of his dreams."

And Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands, and said, "Let us not kill him. Shed no blood, cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay not hand upon him," that he might rid him out of their hands to deliver him to his father again.

When Joseph was come unto his brethren, they took him of his coat, his coat of many colours that was on him, and they took him, and cast him into a pit. The pit was empty, and there was no water in it; and they sat down to eat bread. And they lifted up their eyes and looked, and behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead, bearing their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, to carry it down to Egypt.

"What profit is it," Judah said, "if we slay our brother and conceal his blood? Come, let us sell him to the Ishmeelites and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh." And his brethren were content.

Then there passed by Midianites, merchantmen; and Joseph's brethren drew and lifted up Joseph out of the

and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and the Ishmeelites brought Joseph into Egypt. And Reuben returned unto the pit, and, behold, Joseph was not in the pit, and he rent his clothes, and he returned unto his brethren, and said, "The child is not; and I, whither shall I go?" And they took Joseph's coat and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood, and sent the coat of many colours, and brought it to their father, and said, "This have we found; know now whether it be thy son's coat or no."

And Jacob knew it, and said, "It is my son's coat. An evil beast hath devoured him. Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces." And he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins and mourned for his son many days. All his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted, and said, "For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning." Thus his father wept for him.

Joseph was brought down to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmeelites, which had brought him down thither. And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. His master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand; and Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him; and Potiphar made him overseer over his house. All that he had he put into Joseph's hand. From the time that he had made him overseer in his house and over all that he had, the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field. And Potiphar left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat.

Joseph was a goodly person and well favoured, and his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, "Lie

with me." But he refused and said unto his master's wife, "Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand. There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and against God?" And it came to pass as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her to be with her.

About this time Joseph went into the house to do business, and there was none of the men of the house within. And she caught him by his garment, saying, "Come with me," and he left his garment in her hand, and fled. She got him out. When she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and was fled forth, she called unto the men of the house, and spake unto them, saying, "See he hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us. He came in unto me and lay with me, and I cried with a loud voice; and when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, he left his garment with me, and fled, and got him out."

She laid up his garment by her, until his lord came home, and she spake unto him according to these words, saying, "The Hebrew servant which thou hast brought unto us, came in unto me to mock me. And as I lifted up my voice and cried, he left his garment with me, and fled out."

When his master heard the words of his wife, his anger was kindled, and Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were kept, and he was there in the prison. But the Lord was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the eyes of the keeper of the prison; and the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there he was the keeper of it. The keeper of the prison looked not to anything

was under Joseph's hand, because the Lord was with him, and that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper.

It came to pass after these things, that the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker had offended their lord the king of Egypt, and Pharaoh was wroth against two of his officers, against the chief of the butlers, and against the chief of the bakers, and he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the prison, the place where Joseph was bound. The captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them; and they continued a season in ward.

And they dreamed a dream both of them, each man his dream in one night, each man according to the interpretation of his dream, the butler and the baker of the King of Egypt, which were bound in the prison. And Joseph came in unto them in the morning, and looked upon them, and, behold, they were sad, and he asked Pharaoh's officers that were with him in the ward of his lord's house, saying, "Wherefore look ye so sadly to-day?"

"We have dreamed a dream," they said, "and there is no interpreter of it."

"Do not interpretations belong to God?" said Joseph. "Tell me them, I pray you."

And the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, "In my dream, behold, a vine was before me; and in the vine were three branches; and it was as though it budded, and her blossoms shot forth, and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes. Pharaoh's cup was in my hand; and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand."

"This is the interpretation of it," said Joseph. "The three branches are three days; yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head, and restore thee unto thy place, and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the

former manner when thou wast his butler. But think on when it shall be well with thee, and shew kindness, I thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, bring me out of this house. For indeed I was stolen out of the land of the Hebrews, and here also have I nothing that they should put me into the dungeon."

When the chief baker saw that the interpretation good, he said unto Joseph, "I also was in my dream, behold, I had three white baskets on my head, and in uppermost basket there was of all manner of bakemeat: Pharaoh; and the birds did eat them out of the basket on my head."

Joseph answered, "This is the interpretation the The three baskets are three days; yet within three days Pharaoh lift up thine head from off thee, and shall 1 thee on a tree; and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off th

And it came to pass the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast unto all his servants; and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants. He restored the chief butler unto his butlership again; and he gave the cup unto Pharaoh's hand. But he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted their dreams. Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, and forgat him.

At the end of two full years, Pharaoh dreamed. Behold he stood by the river, and behold, there came up out of the river seven well favoured kine and fat-fleshed, and fed in a meadow. And behold seven other kine came up after them out of the river, ill favoured and lean-fleshed, and stood by the other kine upon the brink of the river; and the well favoured and lean-fleshed kine did eat up the seven ill favoured and fat kine. So Pharaoh awoke. He slept and dreamed the second time, and behold, seven ears of corn came up upon one stalk, fat and good, and behold seven thin ears of corn came up upon the same stalk, and the thin ears did eat up the seven fat ears.

thin ears and blasted with the east wind sprung up after them. And the seven thin ears devoured the seven fat and full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and, behold, it was a dream.

In the morning his spirit was troubled, and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof, and Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh. Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, "I do remember my faults this day. Pharaoh was wroth with his servant, and put me in a ward in the captain of the guard's house, both me and the chief baker; and we dreamed a dream in one night, I and he. We dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream. There was there with us a young man, an Hebrew, servant to the captain of the guard, and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams, to each man according to his dream he did interpret. And as he interpreted to us, so it was; me he restored unto mine office, and him he hanged."

Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon; and he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, "I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it: and I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it."

"It is not in me. God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace," Joseph answered.

And Pharaoh said, "In my dream behold, I stood upon the bank of the river. And behold there came up out of the river seven kine, fat fleshed and well favoured: and they fed in a meadow. And, behold, seven other kine came up after them, poor and very ill favoured and lean-fleshed, such as I never saw in all the land of Egypt for badness; and the lean and the ill favoured kine did eat up the first seven fat kine, and when they had eaten them up, it could not be

known that they had eaten them, but they were still ill favoured, as at the beginning. So I awoke. And I saw in my dream, and, behold, seven ears came up in one stalk, full and good; and, behold, seven ears, withered, thin and blasted with the east wind, sprung up after them, and the thin ears devoured the seven good ears. I told this unto the magicians, but there was none that could declare it to me."

"The dream of Pharaoh is one," said Joseph. "God hath showed Pharaoh what he is about to do. The seven good kine are seven years, and the seven good ears are seven years. The dream is one. And the seven thin and ill-favoured kine that came up after them are seven years. And the seven empty ears blasted with the east wind shall be seven years of famine. This is the thing which I have spoken unto Pharaoh. What God is about to do he sheweth unto Pharaoh. Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt, and there shall arise after them seven years of famine. All the plenty shall be forgotten, in the land of Egypt, and the famine shall consume the land. The plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine following, for it shall be very grievous. For that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice, it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.

"Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years. Let them gather all the food of those good years that come and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. That food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt, that the land perish not through famine."

The thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the

eyes of all his servants; and Pharaoh said unto his servants, "Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the spirit of God is?" And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, "Forasmuch as God hath showed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art. Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou. See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt."

And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck. He made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, "Bow the knee"; and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, "I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt."

Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh and went throughout all the land of Egypt. In the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls. He gathered up all the food of the seven years, which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities. The food of the field, which was round about every city, laid he up in the same. And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering; for it was without number.

And the seven years of plenteousness that was in the land of Egypt were ended, and the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said. The dearth was in all lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. When all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread, and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, "Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you do."

The famine was over all the face of the earth; and Joseph

opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt. All countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn, because that the famine was so sore in all lands.

Now when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, he said unto his sons, "Why do ye look one upon another? Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt; get you down thither, and buy for us from thence, that we may live and not die." And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt, but Benjamin, Joseph's brother,¹ Jacob sent not with his brethren, for he said, "lest peradventure mischief befall him." And the sons of Israel came to buy corn among those that came, for the famine was in the land of Canaan.

Joseph was the governor over the land, and he it was that sold to all the people of the land; and Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth. And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them, and said, "Whence come ye?"

"From the land of Canaan to buy food," they said.

Joseph knew his brethren but they knew not him; and Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, "Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come."

"Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come. We are all one man's sons; we are true men, thy servants are no spies."

"Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land ye are come," said Joseph.

And they said, "Thy servants are twelve brethren, the

¹ Joseph and Benjamin were Rachel's only two sons; and in giving birth to Benjamin Rachel died (Genesis xxx. 22-24 and xxxv. 16-19). The other brothers were the sons of Leah and the two handmaids.—ED.

sons of a man in the land of Canaan; and behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not."

"That is it that I spake unto you, saying, 'Ye are spies,'" said Joseph. "Hereby ye shall be proved. By the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither. Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be kept in prison, that your words may be proved, whether there be any truth in you; or else by the life of Pharaoh surely ye are spies." And he put them all together into ward three days, and he said unto them the third day, "This do, and live, for I fear God. If ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison; go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses, but bring your youngest brother unto me. So shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die."

And they did so; and said one to another, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us."

"Spake I not unto you," Reuben answered them, "saying, 'Do not sin against the child,' and ye would not hear? Therefore, behold, also his blood is required."

They knew not that Joseph understood them, for he spake unto them by an interpreter; and he turned himself about from them, and wept; and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes. Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn and to restore every man's money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way; and thus did he unto them. And they laded their asses with the corn, and departed thence. And as one of them opened his sack to give his ass provender in the inn, he espied his money, for, behold, it was in his sack's mouth. And he said unto his brethren, "My money is restored, and, lo, it is even in my

sack," And their heart failed them, and they were afraid, saying one to another, "What is this that God hath done unto us?"

They came unto Jacob their father unto the land of Canaan, and told him all that befell unto them, saying, "The man, who is the lord of the land, spake roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country. And we said, 'We are true men, we are no spies. We be twelve brethren, sons of our father, one is not, and the youngest is this day with our father in the land of Canaan.' And the man, the lord of the country, said unto us, 'Hhereby shall I know that ye are true men. Leave one of your brethren here with me, and take food for the famine of your households, and be gone. Bring your youngest brother unto me, then shall I know that ye are no spies, but that ye are true men. So will I deliver your brother, and ye shall traffic in the land.' "

And it came to pass as they emptied their sacks, that, behold, every man's bundle of money was in his sack, and when both they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid.

"Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away. All these things are against me," Jacob said unto them.

And Reuben spake unto his father, "Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee; deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again."

"My son shall not go down with you," Jacob said, "for his brother is dead, and he is left alone. If mischief befell him by the way in which ye go, then shall ye bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave."

The famine was sore in the land; and when they had eaten up the corn which they had brought out of Egypt, their father said unto them, "Go again, buy us a little food."

And Judah spake unto him, saying, "The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, 'Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you.' If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food. But if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down; for the man said unto us, 'Ye shall not see my face except your brother be with you.' "

"Wherefore dealt ye so ill with me, as to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother?" Israel said.

"The man asked us straightly of our state, and of our kindred, saying, 'Is your father yet alive? Have ye another brother?' and we told him according to the tenor of these words. Could we certainly know that he would say, 'Bring your brother down'?"

"Send the lad with me," said Judah, "and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we, and thou, and also our little ones. I will be surety for him. Of my hand shalt thou require him; if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever. For except we had lingered, surely now had we returned this second time."

And their father Israel said unto them, "If it must be so now, do this. Take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices and myrrh, nuts, and almonds. Take double money in your hands; and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sack, carry it again in your hand, peradventure it was an oversight. Take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man. And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin. If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved."

The men took that present, and they took double money in their hand, and Benjamin; and arose up and went down to

Egypt, and stood before Joseph. And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the ruler of the house, "Bring these men home, and slay and make ready, for these men shall dine with me at noon."

The man did as Joseph bade; and his brethren were afraid, because they were brought unto Joseph's house; and they said, "Because of the money that was returned in our sacks at the first time are we brought in, that he may seek occasion against us, and fall upon us, and take us for bondmen, and our asses." And they came near to the steward of Joseph's house, and communed with him at the door of the house, and said, "O, sir, we came indeed down at the first time to buy food. And it came to pass, when we came to the inn, that we opened our sacks, and behold every man's money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight; and we have brought it again in our hands. And other money have we brought down in our hands to buy food. We cannot tell who put our money in our sacks."

"Peace be with you," said the steward, "Fear not. Your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks. I had your money." And he brought Simeon out unto them, and he brought the men into Joseph's house and gave them water, and they washed their feet, and he gave their asses provender; and they made ready the present against Joseph came at noon, for they heard that they should eat bread there. And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed themselves to him to the earth. He asked them of their welfare, and said, "Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive?"

"Thy servant our father is in good health, he is yet alive," they answered; and they bowed their heads and made obseisance; and Joseph lifted up his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, "Is this your younger

brother, of whom ye spake unto me? God be gracious unto thee, my son." And Joseph made haste, for his bowels did yearn upon his brother, and he sought where to weep; he entered into his chamber, and wept there, and he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself and said, "Set on bread."

They set on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians which did eat with him, by themselves, for the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews. They sat before him, the first born according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth: and the men marvelled one at another. He took and sent messes unto them from before him; but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry with him. And he commanded the steward of the house, saying, "Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in his sack's mouth. And put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, and his corn money." And he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken.

As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away, they and their asses. When they were gone out of the city, and not yet far off, Joseph said unto his steward, "Up, follow after the men; and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, 'Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good? Is not this it in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth? Ye have done evil in so doing.' "

And the steward overtook them, and spake unto them these words, and they said unto him, "Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing. Behold, the money which we found in our sack's mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan, how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold? With whomsoever of thy

servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen."

"Now also let it be according unto your words," said the steward. "He with whom it is found shall be my servant; and ye shall be blameless."

Then they speedily took down every man his sack to the ground, and opened every man his sack. He searched and began at the eldest, and left at the youngest; and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. Then they rent their clothes, and laded every man his ass, and returned to the city. And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house, for he was yet there, and they fell before him on the ground.

"What deed is this ye have done?" said Joseph. "Wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine?"

"What shall we say unto my lord?" Judah said. "What shall we speak? Or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants. Behold, we are my lord's servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found."

"God forbid that I should do so," said Joseph, "but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father."

Then Judah came near unto him and said, "O my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thy anger burn against thy servant, for thou art even as Pharaoh. My lord asked his servants saying, 'Have ye a father or a brother?' And we said unto my lord, 'We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him.' And thou saidst unto thy servants, 'Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him.' And we said unto my lord, 'The lad cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die.' Thou saidst unto thy servants, 'Except your youngest

brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more.' And it came to pass when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of the lord. Our father said, 'Go again and buy us a little food.' And we said, 'We cannot go down. If our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down, for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us.' And thy servant my father said unto us, 'Ye know that my wife bare me two sons. The one went out from me, and I said surely he is torn in pieces, and I saw him not since. And if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.' Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad be not with us, seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life, it shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die; and thy servants shall bring down the grey hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave. For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, 'If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever.' Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father and the lad be not with me, lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father?"

Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, "Cause every man to go out from me," and there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known to his brethren. And he wept aloud and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard.

And Joseph said unto his brethren, "I am Joseph. Doth my father yet live?" And his brethren could not answer him, for they were troubled at his presence. "Come near to me, I pray you," said Joseph unto his brethren. And they came near.

"I am Joseph," he said, "your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither, for God did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine been in the land, and yet there are five years in which there shall neither be earing nor harvest. God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you who sent me hither, but God; and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, 'Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt, come down unto me, tarry not. Thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flock, and thy herds, and all that thou hast; and there will I nourish thee, for yet there are five years of famine, lest thou and thy household and all that thou hast come to poverty.' Behold your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you. And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither."

And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them; and after that his brethren talked with him.

The fame thereof was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, "Joseph's brethren are come." And it pleased Pharaoh well and his servants, and Pharaoh said unto Joseph, "Say unto thy brethren, 'This do ye, lade your beasts, and go, get you unto the land of Canaan and take your father and your households, and come unto me. I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat the fat of the land.' Now

thou art commanded, this do ye, take you wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father and come. Also regard not your stuff; for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours."

And the children of Israel did so; and Joseph gave them wagons, according to the commandment of Pharaoh and gave them provision for the way. To all of them he gave each man changes of raiment; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver, and five changes of raiment. And to his father he sent after this manner, ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she-asses laden with corn and bread and meat for his father by the way. So he sent his brethren away, and they departed; and he said unto them, "See that ye fall not out by the way."

And they went up out of Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father, and told him, saying, "Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt." And Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not. They told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them; and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived; and he said, "It is enough, Joseph my son is yet alive. I will go and see him before I die."

Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beer-sheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac. And God spake unto Israel in the vision of the night, and said, "Jacob, Jacob."

"Herc am I."

"I am God, the God of thy father. Fear not to go down into Egypt, for I will there make of thee a great nation. I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again; and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes."

And Jacob rose up from Beer-sheba; and the sons of Israel

carried Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him. They took their cattle, and their goods, which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob and all his seed with him. And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen, and presented himself unto him; and he fell on his neck and wept on his neck a good while. And Israel said unto Joseph, "Now let me die since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive."

And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph saying, "Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee. The land of Egypt is before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and thy brethren to dwell, in the land of Goshen let them dwell; and if thou knowest any men of activity among them, then make them rulers over my cattle." And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh, and Pharaoh said unto Jacob, "How old art thou?"

"The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years," said Jacob. "Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of my life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage." And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh. And Joseph placed his father and his brethren, and gave them possession in the land of Egypt in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded.

It came to pass after these things, that one told Joseph, "Behold, thy father is sick," and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. And one told Jacob, and said, "Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee," and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed.

And Jacob beheld Joseph's sons and said, "Who are these?"

"They are my sons, whom God hath given me in this place," Joseph said.

"Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them."

Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not see. And Joseph brought them near unto him and he kissed them and embraced them, and he said unto Joseph, "I had not thought to see thy face; and, lo, God hath shewed me also thy seed." And Joseph brought them out from between his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth.

And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near unto him. And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the first born. When Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him; and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head, and said unto his father, "Not so, my father; for this is the first born; put thy right hand upon his head."

And his father refused. "I know it, my son, I know it: he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations." And he blessed them that day.

And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, "Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days." And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people. And Joseph fell upon his father's face and wept upon him, and kissed him.

When Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, "Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him." And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, "Thy father did command before he died, saying, 'So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil': and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father." And Joseph wept when they spake unto him. And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, "Behold, we be thy servants."

"Fear not," Joseph said unto them, "for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore fear ye not; I will nourish you, and your little ones." And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them. And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he and his father's house; and Joseph died being an hundred and ten years old; and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

GENESIS xxxvii. 3-35, xxxix, xl, xli, xlii, xliii, xliv, xlv, xlvi. 1-6, 29, 30, xlvii. 5-10, xlviii. 1-14, 17-20, xl ix. 1 and 33, l. 1, 15-22, 26

2. A CORNER IN WHEAT

There was no bread in all the land; for the famine was very sore, so that the land of Egypt, and all the land of Canaan, fainted by reason of the famine. And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, for the corn which they bought; and brought the money into Pharaoh's house. When money failed in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, all

the Egyptians came unto Joseph, and said, "Give us bread. Why should we die in thy presence? For the money faileth."

"Give your cattle," Joseph said, "and I will give you for your cattle, if money fail." And they brought their cattle unto Joseph; and Joseph gave them bread in exchange for horses, and for the flocks, and for the cattle of the herds, and for the asses; and he fed them with bread for all their cattle for that year.

When that year was ended, they came unto him the second year, and said, "We will not hide it from my lord, how that our money is spent. My lord also hath our herds of cattle. There is not ought left in the sight of my lord, but our bodies and our lands. Wherefore shall we die before thine eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh; and give us seed, that we may live and not die, that the land be not desolate."

And Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine prevailed over them; so the land became Pharaoh's. As for the people, he removed them to cities from one end of the borders of Egypt even to the other end thereof. Only the land of the priests bought he not; for the priests had a portion assigned them of Pharaoh, and did eat their portion which Pharaoh gave them; wherefore they sold not their lands.

Then Joseph said unto the people, "Behold, I have bought you this day and your land for Pharaoh. Lo, here is seed for you, and ye shall sow the land. And it shall come to pass in the increase, that ye shall give the fifth part unto Pharaoh; and four parts shall be your own, for seed of the field, and for your food, and for them of your households, and for food of your little ones."

And they said, "Thou hast saved our lives. Let us find

grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants."

And Joseph made it a law over the land of Egypt unto this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth part; except the land of the priests only, which became not Pharaoh's.

GENESIS xlvi. 13-26

M O S E S

1. "A STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND"

THE children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them.

Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, "Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we. Come on, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land."

Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour. They made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field; all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour.

And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, "When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, if it be a son, then ye shall kill him; but if it be a daughter, then she shall live." But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive. Therefore God dealt well with the midwives; and the people multiplied and waxed very mighty. And Pharaoh charged all his people, "Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive."

There went a man of the house of Levi, and he took to

wife a daughter of Levi; and the woman conceived and bare a son, and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. When she could no longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink; and his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him. The daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it, and when she had opened it, she saw the child; and behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children."

Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?"

"Go," said Pharaoh's daughter, and the maid went and called the child's mother, and Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, "Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages." And the woman took the child and nursed it. The child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son, and she called his name Moses, "Because I drew him out of the water," she said.

When Moses was grown he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens; and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren. He looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together; and Moses said to him that did the wrong, "Wherfore smitest thou thy fellow?"

"Who made thee a prince and a judge over us?" he said. "Intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian?"

And Moses feared and said, "Surely this thing is known." Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian; and he sat down by a well. Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. And the shepherds came and drove them away; but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock.

When they came to Jethro their father he said, "How is it that ye are come so soon to-day?"

"An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and also drew water enough for us, and watered the flock."

"Where is he? Why is it that ye have left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread."

And Moses was content to dwell with the man, and he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter. And she bare him a son, and he called his name Gershom; for he said, "I have been a stranger in a strange land."

EXODUS i. 7 to end, ii. 1-22

2. THE BURNING BUSH

In process of time the king of Egypt died; and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage; and they cried and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob; and God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them.

Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. He led the flock to the back side of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush burnt with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And

Moses said, "I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt."

When the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him, out of the midst of the bush, "Moses! Moses!"

"Here am I."

And the Lord said, "Draw not nigh hither. Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.

And the Lord said, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows. I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey, unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites. Now therefore behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me, and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."

And Moses said unto God, "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?"

And the Lord said, "Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee—when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain."

"Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, 'The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you,' and they shall say to me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say unto them?"

“I AM THAT I AM. Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, ‘I AM hath sent me unto you.’ ” And God said moreover, unto Moses, “Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, ‘The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob hath sent me unto you.’ This is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations. Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, ‘The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt. And I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey.’ And they shall hearken to thy voice; and thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and ye shall say unto him, ‘The Lord God of the Hebrews hath met with us; and now let us go, we beseech thee, three days’ journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God.’ And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand. And I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go. I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, and it shall come to pass, that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty, but every woman shall borrow of her neighbour, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiments. Ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters, and ye shall spoil the Egyptians.”

Moses answered, “But behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice; for they will say, ‘The Lord hath not appeared unto thee.’ ”

The Lord said unto him, “What is that in thine hand?”

"A rod."

"Cast it on the ground." And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it.

The Lord said unto Moses, "Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail," and he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand.

"That they may believe that the Lord God of their fathers, the of God Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee. Put now thine hand into thy bosom."

And Moses put his hand into his bosom; and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous as snow.

"Put thine hand into thy bosom again."

And he put his hand into his bosom again; and plucked it out of his bosom, and, behold, it was turned again as his other flesh.

"And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign. And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon dry land: and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land."

"O my Lord," said Moses, "I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant; but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue."

And the Lord said unto him, "Who hath made man's mouth? Or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say."

"O my Lord," said Moses, "send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou shouldest send."

And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses, and he said, "Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know

that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee; and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart. Thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth. And I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach ye what ye shall do. He shall be thy spokesman unto the people; and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be him instead of God. And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs."

And Moses went and returned to Jethro his father-in-law and said, "Let me go, I pray thee, and return unto my brethren which are in Egypt, and see whether they be yet alive."

"Go in peace," said Jethro. And Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon an ass, and he returned to the land of Egypt. And Moses took the rod of God in his hand.

EXODUS ii. 23 to end, iii, iv, 1-20

3. THE SPOILING OF THE EGYPTIANS

The Lord said to Aaron, "Go into the wilderness to meet Moses." And he went, and met him in the mount of God, and kissed him; and Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord who had sent him and all the signs which he had commanded him. And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel, and Aaron spake all the words which the Lord had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed; and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped.

Afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, 'Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.' "

"Who is the Lord," said Pharaoh, "that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go."

"The God of the Hebrews hath met with us," they said. "Let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the Lord our God lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword."

And the king of Egypt said, "Wherfore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? Get you unto your burdens. Behold, the people of the land now are many, and ye make them rest from their burdens." And Pharaoh commanded the same day the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, "Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore. Let them go and gather straw for themselves. And the tale of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them. Ye shall not diminish ought thereof; for they be idle; therefore they cry, saying, 'Let us go and sacrifice to our God.' Let there more work be laid upon the men, that they may labour therein; and let them not regard vain words."

And the taskmasters of the people went out, and their officers, and spake to the people, "Thus saith Pharaoh, 'I will not give you straw. Go ye, get your straw where ye can find it: yet not ought of your work shall be diminished.'" So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble instead of straw. And the taskmasters hasted them, saying, "Fulfil your works, your daily tasks, as when there was straw." And the officers of the children of Israel, which Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten, and demanded, "Wherfore have ye not fulfilled your task in making brick both yesterday and to-day, as heretofore?"

Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried unto Pharaoh, "Wherfore dealest thou thus with thy

servants? There is no straw given unto thy servants, and they say to us, 'Make brick.' And, behold, thy servants are beaten; but the fault is in thine own people."

But he said, "Ye are idle, ye are idle: therefore ye say, 'Let us go and do sacrifice to the Lord.' Go therefore now and work: for there shall no straw be given you, yet shall ye deliver the tale of bricks."

The officers of the children of Israel did see that they were in evil case, after it was said, "Ye shall not minish ought from your bricks of your daily task." And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh, and said unto them, "The Lord look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us."

Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, "Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? Why is it that thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all."

Then the Lord said, "Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh. With a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land." And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel; but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.

[Then the Lord brought the plagues upon the land of Egypt, the water turned into blood, the frogs, and lice, the flies, the cattle-disease, the boils, the hail, the locusts, and the darkness. But every time when the plague was taken away Pharaoh hardened his heart and refused to let the children of Israel go.—ED.]

The Lord said unto Moses, "Yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt. Afterwards he shall

let you go hence. When he shall let you go he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether. Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold." And the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants and in the sight of the people.

And Moses said to Pharaoh, "Thus saith the Lord, 'About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt; and all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the first-born of the maid-servant that is behind the mill, and all the first-born of the beasts. And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more. But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast, that ye may know how that the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.' All these thy servants shall come down unto me, saying, 'Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee'; and after that I will go out." And he went out from Pharaoh in a great anger.

And at midnight the Lord smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the first-born of cattle. Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead. And Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, "Rise up and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the Lord, as ye have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also."

The Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, "We be all dead men." And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders. And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment. And the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians.

It was told the king of Egypt that the people fled; and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, and they said, "Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?" And Pharaoh made ready his chariot, and took his people with him. He took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them, and the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and he pursued after the children of Israel. The children of Israel went out with an high hand, but the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pihahiroth, before Baal-zephon. And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid; and the children of Israel cried out unto the Lord, and they said unto Moses, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, 'Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians?' For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness."

"Fear ye not," Moses said unto the people, "stand still,

and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show to you to-day. The Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."

And the Lord said unto Moses, "Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward. But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it; and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea." And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them. It came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel. It was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these; so that the one came not near the other all the night.

And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground, and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. The Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. And in the morning watch the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, and took off their chariot wheels, that they drove them heavily, so that the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians."

And the Lord said unto Moses, "Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen." And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the

Egyptians fled against it; and the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them.

Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore. And Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians; and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and his servant Moses.

EXODUS v. vi. 1 and 9, xi. 1-8, xii. 29-36, xiv. 5 to end

4. THE WANDERINGS OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL

I

All the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the Lord, and pitched in Rephidim: and there was no water for the people to drink. Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, "Give us water that we may drink."

"Why chide ye with me?" Moses said. "Wherefore do ye tempt the Lord?"

And the people thirsted there for water, and murmured against Moses, and said, "Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?"

And Moses cried unto the Lord, "What shall I do unto this people? They be almost ready to stone me."

"Go on before the people," the Lord said unto Moses, "and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go. Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink."

And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord among us, or not?"

Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim, and Moses said unto Joshua, "Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek. To-morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand."

So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek, and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

The Lord said unto Moses, "Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua; for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi. For he said, "Because the Lord hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation."¹

EXODUS xvii

2

In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they unto the wilderness of Sinai, and there Israel camped before the mount.

¹ For the sequel to this story see "To Obey is better than Sacrifice," p. 184.

The Lord said unto Moses, "Come up unto the Lord, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: and worship ye afar off. Moses alone shall come near the Lord; but they shall not come nigh, neither shall the people go up with him." Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments. And all the people answered with one voice, and said, "All the words which the Lord hath said will we do."

Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and they saw the God of Israel. There was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand; also they saw God, and did eat and drink.

And the Lord said unto Moses, "Come up to me into the mount, and be there. I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them."

And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua: and Moses went up into the mount of God. And Moses said unto the elders, "Tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you. Behold, Aaron and Hur are with you. If any man have any matters to do, let him come unto them."

And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount. The glory of the Lord abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. The sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel. And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.

When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, they gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, "Up, make us gods, which shall go before

us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him."

"Break off the golden ear-rings which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me," said Aaron unto them. And all the people brake off their golden ear-rings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. He received them at their hands, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf. And they said, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."

When Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it, and made proclamation, "To-morrow is a feast to the Lord." And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

And the Lord said unto Moses, "Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, 'These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.' I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people. Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them, and I will make of thee a great nation."

Moses besought the Lord his God, "Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, 'For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth?' Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel,

thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, 'I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever.'"

And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people. And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand. The tables were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written. And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables.

When Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, "There is a noise of war in the camp."

"It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery," said Moses, "neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome; but the noise of them that sing do I hear."

And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing; and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount. And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it. And Moses said unto Aaron, "What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them?"

"Let not the anger of my lord wax hot," Aaron said. "Thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief. They said unto me, 'Make us gods which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.' And I said unto them, 'Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off.' So they gave it me. Then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf."

And when Moses saw that the people were naked (for

Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies), then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, "Who is on the Lord's side? Let him come unto me."

And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him, and he said unto them, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, 'Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour.' " The children of Levi did according to the word of Moses; and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men.

It came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, "Ye have sinned a great sin, and now I will go up unto the Lord, peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin." And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, "Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold! Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written."

"Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book," the Lord said unto Moses. "Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee. Behold, mine angel shall go before thee; nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them."

And the Lord plagued the people, because they made the calf which Aaron made.

EXODUS xix. 1 and 2, xxiv. 1 to end, xxxii. to end

Korah, the son of Izhar, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, took men, and rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown. They gathered themselves

together against Moses and Aaron, and said, "Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them. Wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?"

When Moses heard it, he fell upon his face, and spake unto Korah, and unto all his company, "Even to-morrow the Lord will show who are his, and who is holy; and will cause him whom he hath chosen to come near unto him. This do. Take your censers, Korah, and all his company, and put fire therein, and put incense in them before the Lord to-morrow; and it shall be that the man whom the Lord doth choose, he shall be holy. Ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi." And he said, "Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi. Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself, to do the service of the tabernacle of the Lord, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them? He hath brought thee near to him, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee; and seek ye the priesthood also? For which cause both thou and all thy company are gathered together against the Lord. And what is Aaron, that ye murmur against him?"

And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab; which said, "We will not come up. Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us? Moreover thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey, or given us inheritance of fields and vineyards. Wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up."

And Moses was very wroth, and said unto the Lord, "Respect not thou their offering. I have not taken one ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them," and unto Korah,

"Be thou and all thy company before the Lord, thou, and they, and Aaron, to-morrow. And take every man his censer, and put incense in them, and bring ye before the Lord every man his censer, two hundred and fifty censers; thou also, and Aaron, each of you his censer."

They took every man his censer, and put fire in them and laid incense thereon, and stood in the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the congregation.

And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, "Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment." And they fell upon their faces, and said, "O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation?"

And the Lord spake unto Moses, "Speak unto the congregation, saying, 'Get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.' "

Moses rose up, and went unto Dathan and Abiram; and the elders of Israel followed him, and he spake unto the congregation, "Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins."

So they gat up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side; and Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children.

And Moses said, "Hereby ye shall know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind. If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men, then the Lord hath not sent me. But if the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down

quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord."

And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them. And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them; and they perished from among the congregation. And all Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them; and they said, "Lest the earth swallow us up also." And there came out a fire from the Lord, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense.

NUMBERS xvi. 1-35

4

Then came the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, into the desert of Zin in the first month. The people abode in Kadesh; and Miriam died there, and was buried there. And there was no water for the congregation: and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron; and the people chode with Moses, and spake, saying, "Would God that we had died when our brethren died before the Lord! Why have ye brought up the congregation of the Lord into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there? And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us in unto this evil place? It is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates, neither is there any water to drink."

Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they fell upon their faces: and the glory of the Lord appeared unto them; and the Lord spake unto Moses saying, "Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou and

Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock. So thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink."

Moses took the rod from before the Lord, as he commanded him, and Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, "I hear now, ye rebels. Must we fetch you water out of this rock?" And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice; and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also. And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, "Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them."

NUMBERS XX. 1-12

5. BALAK AND BALAAM

The children of Israel set forward, and pitched in the plains of Moab this side Jordan by Jericho. Moab was sore afraid of the people, because they were many: and Moab was distressed because of the children of Israel, and Moab said unto the elders of Midian, "Now shall this company lick up all that are round about us, as the ox licketh up the grass of the field."

Balak the son of Zippor was king of the Moabites at that time. He sent messengers therefore unto Balaam the son of Beor, to call him, saying, "Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt. Behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me. Come now therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people, for they are too mighty for me. Peradventure I shall prevail, that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land. For I wot that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest

is cursed." And the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the rewards of divination in their hand; and they came unto Balaam, and spake unto him the words of Balak.

"Lodge here this night," he said unto them, "and I will bring you word again, as the Lord shall speak unto me"; and the princes of Moab abode with Balaam.

And God came unto Balaam, and said, "What men are these with thee?"

"Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, hath sent unto me, saying, 'Behold, there is a people come out of Egypt, which covereth the face of the earth. Come now, curse me them; peradventure I shall be able to overcome them, and drive them out,'" Balaam said unto God.

And God said unto Balaam, "Thou shalt not go with them. Thou shalt not curse the people, for they are blessed."

Balaam rose up in the morning, and said unto the princes of Balak, "Get you unto your land, for the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you." And the princes of Moab rose up, and they went unto Balak, and said, "Balaam refuseth to come with us." And Balak sent yet again princes, more, and more honourable than they. They came to Balaam, and said to him, "Thus saith Balak the son of Zippor, 'Let nothing, I pray thee, hinder thee from coming unto me. I will promote thee unto very great honour, and I will do whatsoever thou sayest unto me; come therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people.'"

Balaam answered unto the servants of Balak, "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more. Now therefore, I pray you, tarry ye also here this night, that I may know what the Lord will say unto me more."

God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, "If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them;

but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do." And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab.

And God's anger was kindled because he went; and the angel of the Lord stood in the way for an adversary against him. Now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants were with him. And the ass saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand, and the ass turned aside out of the way, and went into the field, and Balaam smote the ass, to turn her into the way. But the angel of the Lord stood in the path of the vineyards, a wall being on this side, and a wall on that side. And when the ass saw the angel of the Lord, she thrust herself unto the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall, and he smote her again. And the angel of the Lord went further, and stood in a narrow place, where was no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left. And when the ass saw the angel of the Lord, she fell down under Balaam. And Balaam's anger was kindled, and he smote the ass with a staff. And the Lord opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, "What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times?"

"Because thou hast mocked me. I would there were a sword in mine hand, for now would I kill thee," Balaam said unto the ass.

And the ass said unto Balaam, "Am not I thine ass upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine unto this day? Was I ever wont to do so unto thee?"

"Nay," he said.

Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand, and Balaam bowed down his head and fell flat on his face, and the angel of the Lord said unto him, "Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? Behold,

I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before me. And the ass saw me, and turned from me these three times. Unless she had turned from me, surely now also I had slain thee, and saved her alive."

And Balaam said unto the angel of the Lord, "I have sinned; for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me. Now therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again."

And the angel said, "Go with the men, but only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak."

So Balaam went with the princes of Balak, and when Balak heard that Balaam was come, he went out to meet him. And Balak said unto Balaam, "Did I not earnestly send unto thee, to call thee? Wherefore camest thou not unto me? Am I not able indeed to promote thee to honour?"

"Lo, I am come unto thee," Balaam said. "Have I now any power at all to say anything? The word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak." And Balaam went with Balak, and they came unto Kirjathhuzoth. And Balak offered oxen and sheep and sent to Balaam, and to the princes that were with him.

And it came to pass on the morrow, that Balak took Balaam, and brought him up into the high places of Baal, that thence he might see the utmost part of the people. And Balaam said unto Balak, "Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven oxen and seven rams." Balak did as Balaam had spoken; and Balak and Balaam offered on every altar a bullock and a ram.

"Stand by thy burnt offering," Balaam said, "and I will go; peradventure the Lord will come to meet me, and whatever he sheweth me I will tell thee." And he went to an high place. And God met Balaam. And the Lord put a word in Balaam's mouth, and said, "Return unto Balak, and thus thou shalt speak."

And Balaam returned unto Balak, and lo, he stood by his

burnt sacrifice he, and all the princes of Moab. And Balaam took up his parable and said:—

From Aram hath Balak brought me
The king of Moab from the mountains of the East:
Come, curse me Jacob,
And come, defy Israel.
How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed?
Or how shall I defy whom the Lord hath not defied?
For from the top of the rocks I see him,
And from the hills I behold him:
Lo, it is a people that dwell alone,
And shall not be reckoned among the nations.
Who can count the dust of Jacob,
Or number the fourth part of Israel?
Let me die the death of the righteous,
And let my last end be like his!

“What hast thou done unto me?” said Balak. “I took thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast blessed them altogether.”

“Must I not take heed to speak that which the Lord hath put in my mouth?” Balaam answered.

And Balak said, “Come, I pray thee, with me unto another place, from whence thou mayest see them. Thou shalt see but the utmost part of them, and shalt not see them all; and curse me them from thence.” And he brought him into the field of Zophim, to the top of Pisgah, and built seven altars, and offered a bullock and a ram on every altar. And Balaam said unto Balak, “Stand here by the burnt offering, while I meet the Lord yonder.”

The Lord met Balaam, and put a word in his mouth, and said, “Go again unto Balak, and say thus.” And when Balaam came to Balak, behold, he stood by his burnt offering, and the princes of Moab with him. And Balak said unto him,

“What hath the Lord spoken?” And Balaam took up his parable, and said:—

Rise up, Balak, and hear;
 Harken unto me, thou son of Zippor:
 God is not a man, that he should lie;
 Neither the son of man, that he should repent:
 Hath he said, and shall he not do it?
 Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?
 Behold, I have received commandment to bless:
 And he hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it.
 He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob,
 Neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel:
 The Lord his God is with him,
 And the shout of a king is among them.
 God bringeth them forth out of Egypt;
 He hath as it were the strength of the wild-ox.
 Surely there is no enchantment with Jacob.
 Neither is there any divination with Israel:
 Now shall it be said of Jacob and of Israel,
 What hath God wrought!
 Behold, the people riseth up as a lioness,
 And as a lion doth he lift himself up:
 He shall not lie down until he eat of the prey,
 And drink the blood of the slain.

And Balak said unto Balaam, “Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all.”

“Told not I thee, saying, ‘All that the Lord speaketh, that I must do?’ ” answered Balaam.

And Balak said, “Come, I pray thee, I will bring thee unto another place. Peradventure it will please God that thou mayest curse me them from thence.” And Balak brought Balaam unto the top of Peor, that looketh towards Jeshimon. “Build me here seven altars and prepare me seven bullocks

and seven rams," said Balaam. And Balak did as Balaam had said, and offered a bullock and a ram on every altar. And when Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, he went not, as at other times, to seek for enchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness, and lifted up his eyes and he saw Israel abiding in his tents according to their tribes, and the spirit of God came upon him. And Balaam took up his parable, and said:—

Balaam the son of Beor saith,
And the man whose eye was closed saith:
He saith, which heareth the words of God,
Which seeth the vision of the Almighty,
Falling down, and having his eyes open:
How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob,
Thy tabernacles, O Israel!
As valleys are they spread forth,
As gardens by the river's side,
As lign-aloes which the Lord hath planted,
As cedar trees beside the waters.
Water shall flow from his buckets,
And his seed shall be in many waters,
And his king shall be higher than Agag,
And his kingdom shall be exalted.
God bringeth him forth out of Egypt;
He hath as it were the strength of the wild-ox:
He shall eat up the nations his adversaries,
And shall break their bones in pieces,
And smite them through with his arrows.
He couched, he lay down as a lion,
And as a lioness; who shall rouse him up?
Blessed be every one that blesseth thee,
And cursed be every one that curseth thee.
And Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he

smote his hands together and said, "I called thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast altogether blessed them these three times. Therefore now flee thou to thy place. I thought to promote thee unto great honour, but, lo, the Lord hath kept thee back from honour."

And Balaam said unto Balak, "Spake I not also to thy messengers which thou sentest unto me, saying, 'If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the Lord, to do either good or bad of mine own mind, but what the Lord saith, that will I speak'? And now, behold, I go unto my people; come therefore, and I will advertise thee what this people shall do to thy people in latter days." And he took up his parable, and said:—

Balaam the son of Beor saith,
 And the man whose eye was closed saith:
 He saith, which heareth the words of God,
 And knoweth the knowledge of the Most High,
 Which seeth the vision of the Almighty,
 Falling down, and having his eyes open:
 I see him, but not now:
 I behold him, but not nigh:
 There shall come forth a star out of Jacob,
 And a sceptre shall rise out of Israel,
 And shall smite through the corners of Moab,
 And break down all the sons of tumult.
 And Edom shall be a possession.
 Seir also shall be a possession, which were his enemies;
 While Israel doeth valiantly.
 And out of Jacob shall one have dominion,
 And shall destroy the remnant from the city.

And Balaam rose up and went and returned to his place and Balak also went his way.

JOSHUA

1. THE FALL OF JERICHO

Now after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, it came to pass, that the Lord spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, "Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon, even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast. There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee. I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Be strong, and of a good courage, for unto this people shall thou divide for an inheritance the land which I sware unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law which Moses my servant commanded thee. Turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth: but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein, for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage. Be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed, for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people saying, "Pass through the host, and command the people, saying,

'Prepare you victuals, for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the Lord your God giveth you to possess it.'

And Joshua sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, "Go view the land, even Jericho."

They went and came into an harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there. And it was told the King of Jericho, "Behold, there came men in hither to-night of the children of Israel to search out the country." And he sent unto Rahab, saying, "Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house, for they be come to search out all the country."

The woman took the two men, and hid them, and said thus, "There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they were. And it came to pass, about the time of shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out. Whither the men went I wot not. Pursue after them quickly, for ye shall overtake them." But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof. And the men pursued after them the way to Jordan unto the fords; and as soon as they which pursued after them were gone out, they shut the gate.

Before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof, and said, "I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt, and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you; for the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath. Now therefore, I pray you,

swear unto me by the Lord, since I have showed you kindness, that ye will also show kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token; and that ye will save alive my father and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have and deliver our lives from death."

"Our life for yours," the men answered her, "if ye utter not this our business. And it shall be, when the Lord hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee."

Then she let them down by a cord through the window, for her house was upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall. And she said, "Get you to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned, and afterward may ye go your way."

And the men said unto her, "We will be blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear. Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by; and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee. And it shall be, that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we will be guiltless; and whosever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him. And if thou utter this our business, then we will be quit of thine oath which thou hast made us to swear."

"According unto your words, so be it," she said, and she sent them away, and they departed and she bound the scarlet line in the window.

They went, and came unto the mountains, and abode there three days, until the pursuers were returned; and the pursuers sought them throughout all the way, but found them not. So the two men returned, and descended from the

mountain, and passed over, and came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all things that befell them. "Truly," they said, "the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us."

Joshua rose early in the morning; and they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over. After three days the officers went through the host and commanded the people, "When ye see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests, the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it." And Joshua spake unto the priests, "Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass over before the people." And they took up the ark of the covenant, and went before the people.

When the people removed from their tents, to pass over Jordan, and the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people, and as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest), the waters which come down from above stood and rose up upon an heap very far from the city Adam, and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed and were cut off; and the people passed over right against Jericho. And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan. And when the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord were come up out of the midst of Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up unto the dry land, the waters of Jordan returned unto their place, and flowed over all his banks, as they did before.

Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel. None went out, and none came in. And the Lord said unto Joshua, "See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour. Ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days. Seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns; and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets. And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout, and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him."

And Joshua the son of Nun called the priests, and said, "Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord," and he said unto the people, "Pass on, and compass the city, and let him that is armed pass on before the ark of the Lord."

When Joshua had spoken unto the people, the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns passed on before the Lord, and blew with the trumpets and the ark of the covenant of the Lord followed them. The armed men went before the priests that blew with the trumpets, and the rere-ward came after the ark, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets.

And Joshua had commanded the people, saying, "Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout."

So the ark of the Lord compassed the city, going about it once; and they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp. And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the Lord. And seven priests bearing seven

trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord went on continually, and blew with the trumpets; and the armed men went before them but the rereward came after the ark of the Lord, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets. And the second day they compassed the city once, and returned into the camp. So they did six days.

On the seventh day they rose early, about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times; only on that day they compassed the city seven times. And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, "Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city!"

So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets. And it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city both man and woman, young and old, and ox and sheep and ass, with the edge of the sword.

But Joshua had said unto the two men that had spied out the country, "Go into the harlot's house, and bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath, as ye sware unto her." And the young men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had; and they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel. They burned the city with fire, and all that was therein; only the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord. So the Lord was with Joshua: and his fame was noised throughout all the country.

JOSHUA i. 1-11, ii. iii. 1-3, 6, 14-17, iv. 18, vi. 1-16, 20-24, and 27

2. THE GOODLY BABYLONISH GARMENT

[Immediately before the taking of Jericho Joshua had said unto the people, "The city shall be accursed, even it and all that are therein, to the Lord. Only Rahab, the harlot, shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. And ye in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed when ye take of the accursed thing and make the camp of Israel a curse and trouble it. But all the silver and gold and vessels of brass and iron are consecrated unto the Lord. They shall come into the treasury of the Lord."—ED.]

The children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing, for Achan, the son of Carmi, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing; and the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel. And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Beth-aven, on the east side of Beth-el, saying, "Go up and view the country." And the men went up and viewed Ai, and returned to Joshua, and said, "Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labour thither; for they are but few."

So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men; and they fled before the men of Ai, and the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men; for they chased them before the gate even unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down. Wherefore the hearts of the people melted and became as water. And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads.

"Alas, O Lord God," said Joshua. "Wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? Would to God we had

been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan! O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies! For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth. And what wilt thou do unto thy great name?"

And the Lord said unto Joshua, "Get thee up. Wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them, for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed. Neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you. Up, sanctify the people, and say, 'Sanctify yourselves against to-morrow.' Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, 'There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel! Thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you. In the morning therefore ye shall be brought according to your tribes; and it shall be, that the tribe which the Lord taketh shall come according to the families thereof; and the family which the Lord shall take shall come by households; and the household which the Lord shall take shall come man by man. And it shall be, that he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath, because he hath transgressed the covenant of the Lord, and because he hath wrought folly in Israel.' "

So Joshua rose up early in the morning, and brought Israel by their tribes; and the tribe of Judah was taken. He brought the family of Judah and he took the family of the Zarhites man by man; and Zabdi was taken. He brought his household man by man; and Achan, the son of Carmi, the

son of Zabdi the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken.

“My son,” said Joshua unto Achan, “give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me.”

Achan answered, “Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done. When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.”

So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent; and, behold, it was hid in his tent and the silver under it. They took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua and unto all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the Lord. And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had, and they brought them unto the valley of Achor.

“Why hast thou troubled us? The Lord shall trouble thee this day,” Joshua said. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones; and they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the Lord turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called the valley of Achor unto this day.

3. THE DEFEAT OF AI

The Lord said unto Joshua, "Fear not, neither be thou dismayed. Take all the people of war with thee and arise, go up to Ai; see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land; and thou shalt do to Ai and her king as thou didst unto Jericho and her king; only the spoil thereof, and the cattle thereof, shall ye take for a prey unto yourselves. Lay thee an ambush for the city behind it."

So Joshua arose, and all the people of war, to go up against Ai; and Joshua chose out thirty thousand mighty men of valour, and sent them away by night. And he commanded them, saying, "Behold, ye shall lie in wait against the city, even behind the city. Go not very far from the city, but be ye all ready. And I, and all the people that are with me, will approach unto the city; and it shall come to pass, when they come out against us, as at the first, that we will flee before them (for they will come out after us), till we have drawn them from the city; for they will say, 'They flee before us, as at the first.' Therefore we will flee before them. Then ye shall rise up from the ambush and seize upon the city, for the Lord your God will deliver it into your hand. And when ye have taken the city, ye shall set the city on fire. According to the commandment of the Lord shall ye do. See, I have commanded you."

Joshua therefore sent them forth, and they went to lie in ambush, and abode between Beth-el and Ai, on the west side of Ai; but Joshua lodged that night among the people. And he rose up early in the morning, and numbered the people, and went up, he and the elders of Israel, before the people to Ai. And all the people, even the people of war that were with him, went up and drew nigh, and came before the city,

and pitched on the north side of Ai. Now there was a valley between them and Ai, and he took about five thousand men, and set them to lie in ambush between Beth-el and Ai, on the west side of the city. When they had set the people even all the host that was on the north of the city, and their liers-in-wait on the west of the city, Joshua went that night into the midst of the valley.

When the king of Ai saw it, they hasted and rose up early, and the men of the city went out against Israel to battle, he and all his people, at a time appointed, before the plain; but he wist not that there were liers in ambush against him behind the city. And Joshua and all Israel made as if they were beaten before them, and fled by the way of the wilderness. All the people that were in Ai were called together to pursue after them, and they pursued after Joshua, and were drawn away from the city. There was not a man left in Ai or Beth-el that went not out after Israel; and they left the city open, and pursued after Israel.

And the Lord said unto Joshua, "Stretch out the spear that is in thy hand toward Ai; for I will give it unto thine hand." And Joshua stretched out the spear that he had in his hand toward the city. And the ambush arose quickly out of their place, and they ran as soon as he had stretched out his hand; and they entered into the city, and took it, and hasted and set the city on fire.

When the men of Ai looked behind them, they saw, and, behold, the smoke of the city ascended up to heaven, and they had no power to flee this way or that way, and the people that fled to the wilderness turned back upon the pursuers. And when Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had taken the city, and that the smoke of the city ascended, then they turned again, and slew the men of Ai.

The other issued out of the city against them: so they were in the midst of Israel, some on this side, and some on

that side: and they smote them, so that they let none of them remain or escape. The king of Ai they took alive, and brought him to Joshua. All that fell that day, both of men and women, were twelve thousand, even all the men of Ai; for Joshua drew not his hand back, wherewith he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai. Only the cattle and the spoil of that city Israel took for a prey unto themselves, according unto the word of the Lord which he commanded Joshua. And Joshua burnt Ai, and made it an heap for ever, even a desolation unto this day. The king of Ai he hanged on a tree until eventide; and as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his carcase down from the tree, and cast it at the entering of the gate of the city, and raise thereon a great heap of stones, that remaineth unto this day.

JOSHUA viii. 1-29

4. "HEWERS OF WOOD AND DRAWERS OF WATER"

When the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done unto Jericho and to Ai, they did work wilyly, and went and made as if they had been ambassadors, and took old sacks upon their asses, and wine bottles, old and rent and bound up; old shoes and clouted upon their feet, and old garments upon them; and all the bread of their provision was dry and mouldy. And they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal, and said unto him, and to the men of Israel, "We be come from a far country: now therefore make ye a league with us."

"Peradventure ye dwell among us; and how shall we make a league with you?" said the men of Israel unto the Hivites.

"We are thy servants," they said.

And Joshua said unto them, “Who are ye? And from whence come ye?”

“From a very far country thy servants are come, because of the name of the Lord thy God, for we have heard the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt, and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites that were beyond Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon, and to Og king of Bashan which was at Ashtaroth, wherefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spake to us, saying, ‘Take victuals with you for the journey and go to meet them, and say unto them, We are your servants.’ Therefore now make ye a league with us. This our bread we took hot for our provision out of our houses on the day we came forth to go unto you; but now, behold, it is dry, and it is mouldy. These bottles of wine which we filled were new; and, behold, they be rent; and these our garments and our shoes are become old by reason of the very long journey.”

And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord. And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them to let them live: and the princes of the congregation sware unto them.

It came to pass, at the end of three days after they had made a league with them, that they heard that they were their neighbours and that they dwelt among them. And the children of Israel journeyed and came unto their cities on the third day. Now their cities were Gibeon, and Chephirah, and Beeroth, and Kirjathjearim, and the children of Israel smote them not, because the princes of the congregation had sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel. And all the congregation murmured against the princes. But all the princes said unto all the congregation, “We have sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel, now therefore we may not touch them. This we will do to them; we will even let them live, lest wrath be upon us, because of the oath which

we sware unto them." And the princes said, "Let them live; but let them be hewers of wood and drawers of water unto all the congregation; as the princes had promised them."

And Joshua called for them, and said, "Wherefore have ye beguiled us, saying, 'We are very far from you,' when ye dwell among us? Now therefore ye are cursed; and there shall none of you be freed from being bondmen, and hewers of wood and the drawers of water for the house of my God."

They answered Joshua, "Because it was certainly told thy servants, how that the Lord thy God commanded his servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you, therefore we were sore afraid of our lives because of you, and have done this thing. Now, behold, we are in thine hand. As it seemeth good and right unto thee to do unto us, do."

So did he unto them, and delivered them out of the hand of the children of Israel, that they slew them not. And Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altar of the Lord, even unto this day, in the place which he should choose.

JOSHUA ix. 3-27

5. THE BATTLE OF THE FIVE KINGS

Now it came to pass, when Adoni-zedek king of Jerusalem had heard how Joshua had taken Ai and had utterly destroyed it as he had done to Jericho and her king, so he had done to Ai and her king, and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel, and were among them, that they feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city, as one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all the men thereof were mighty. Wherefore Adoni-zedek sent unto Hoham king of Hebron, unto Piram king of Jarmuth, unto

Japhia king of Lachish, and unto Debir king of Eglon, saying, "Come up unto me, and help me, that we may smite Gibeon, for it hath made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel."

Therefore the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, the king of Eglon, gathered themselves together and went up, they and all their hosts, and encamped before Gibeon, and made war against it. And the men of Gibeon sent unto Joshua to the camp to Gilgal, saying, "Slack not thy hand from thy servants; come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us, for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains are gathered together against us."

So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he, and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valour. And the Lord said unto Joshua, "Fear them not, for I have delivered them into thine hand. There shall not a man of them stand before thee."

Joshua therefore came unto them suddenly, and went up from Gilgal all night. And the Lord discomfited them before Israel, and slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them along the way that goeth up to Beth-horon, and smote them to Azekah, and unto Makkedah. And it came to pass as they fled from before Israel and were in the going down to Beth-horon, that the Lord cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died. They were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword.

Then spake Joshua to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon!"

And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. So the sun

stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man, for the Lord fought for Israel.

Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal. But these five kings fled, and hid themselves in a cave at Makkedah. And it was told Joshua, "The five kings are found hid in a cave at Makkedah."

And Joshua said, "Roll great stones upon the mouth of the cave and set men by it for to keep them. And stay ye not, but pursue after your enemies, and smite the hindmost of them. Suffer them not to enter into their cities, for the Lord your God hath delivered them into your hand."

When Joshua and the children of Israel had made an end of slaying them with a very great slaughter, till they were consumed, the rest which remained of them entered into fenced cities. And all the people returned to the camp to Joshua at Makkedah in peace. None moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel. Then said Joshua, "Open the mouth of the cave, and bring out those five kings unto me out of the cave." And they did so, and brought forth those five kings unto him out of the cave—the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon. And when they brought out those kings unto Joshua, Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said unto the captains of the men of war which went with him, "Come near, put your feet upon the necks of these kings." And they came near, and put their feet upon the necks of them.

Joshua said unto them, "Fear not, nor be dismayed. Be strong, and of good courage, for thus shall the Lord do to all your enemies against whom ye fight." And afterward Joshua smote them, and slew them, and hanged them on five trees: and they were hanging upon the trees until the

evening. And it came to pass at the time of the going down of the sun, that Joshua commanded, and they took them down off the trees, and cast them into the cave wherein they had been hid, and laid great stones in the cave's mouth, which remain until this very day.

JOSHUA X. 1-27

JUDGES

I. DEBORAH AND BARAK

THE children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord sold them unto the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor, the captain of whose host was Sisera. And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, for Jabin had nine hundred chariots of iron, and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel.

Deborah, a prophetess the wife of Lapidoth, judged Israel at that time; she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah, between Ramah and Bethel in mount Ephraim, and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment. She sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam and said unto him, "Hath not the Lord God of Israel commanded saying, 'Go and draw toward mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun? And I will draw unto thee, to the river Kishon, Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots, and his multitude, and I will deliver him into thine hand.'"

"If thou wilt go with me," Barak said, "then I will go; but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go."

"I will surely go with thee. Notwithstanding, the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honour, for the Lord shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman."

And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh; and he went up with ten thousand men at his feet; and Deborah went up with him.

Now Heber the Kenite had severed himself from the Kenites, and pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaim, which is by Kedesh.

They showed Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam was

gone up to Mount Tabor, and Sisera gathered together all his chariots, even nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people that were with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles unto the river of Kishon. And Deborah said unto Barak, "Up! For this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand. Is not the Lord gone out before thee?" So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him. And the Lord discomfited Sisera, and all his chariots and all his host, with the edge of the sword before Barak; so that Sisera lighted down off his chariot, and fled away on his feet. But Barak pursued after the chariots and after the host, unto Harosheth of the Gentiles. All the host of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword; and there was not a man left.

Howbeit Sisera fled away on his feet to the tent of Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite, for there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite. And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said unto him, "Turn in, my lord, turn in to me. Fear not."

When he had turned in unto her into the tent she covered him with a mantle, and he said unto her, "Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink, for I am thirsty."

She opened a bottle of milk, and gave him drink and covered him, and again he said unto her, "Stand in the door of the tent, and when any man doth come and enquire of thee, and say, 'Is there any man here?' thou shalt say, 'No.' "

Then Jael, Heber's wife, took a nail of the tent and took an hammer in her hand and went softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples, and fastened it into the ground, for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died. And, behold, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him, and said unto him, "Come, and I will show thee the man whom thou seekest." And when she came into her tent, behold, Sisera lay dead, and the nail was in his temples.

So God subdued on the day Jabin the king of Canaan before the children of Israel. Then sang Deborah and Barak on that day, saying:—

Praise ye the Lord for the avenging of Israel,
When the people willingly offered themselves.
Hear, O ye kings; give ear, O ye princes;
I, even I, will sing unto the Lord;
I will sing praise to the Lord God of Israel.

Lord, when Thou wentest out of Seir,
When Thou marchedst out of the field of Edom,
The earth trembled, and the heavens dropped,
The clouds also dropped water.
The mountains melted from before the Lord,
Even that Sinai from before the Lord God of Israel.

In the days of Shamgar, the son of Anath,
In the days of Jael, the highways were unoccupied,
And the travellers walked through byways.
The inhabitants of the villages ceased, they ceased in Israel,
Until that I, Deborah, arose,
That I arose, a mother in Israel.
They chose new gods; then was war in the gates:
Was there a shield or spear seen among forty thousand in Israel?
My heart is toward the governors of Israel,
That offered themselves willingly among the people.
Bless ye the Lord.

Speak, ye that ride on white asses,
Ye that sit in judgment, and walk by the way.

They that are delivered from the noise of archers
In the places of drawing water,
There shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord,
Even the righteous acts toward the inhabitants of his
villages in Israel:
Then shall the people of the Lord go down to the gates.

Awake, awake, Deborah!
Awake, awake, utter a song!
Arise, Barak, and lead thy captivity captive, thou son of
Abinoam.
Then he made him that remaineth have dominion over the
nobles among the people:
The Lord made me have dominion over the mighty.

Out of Ephraim was there a root of them against Amalek;
After thee, Benjamin, among thy people:
Out of Machir came down governors,
And out of Zebulun they that handle the pen of the
writer.
And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah,
Even Issachar, and also Barak.
He was sent on foot into the valley.
For the divisions of Reuben there were great thoughts
of heart.
Why abodest thou among the sheep-folds, to hear the
bleatings of the flocks?
For the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of
heart.
Gilead abode beyond Jordan,
And why did Dan remain in ships?
Asher continued on the sea-shore,
And abode in his breaches.

Zebulun and Naphtali were a people that jeopardized their lives unto the death
 In the high places of the field.
 The kings came and fought,
 Then fought the kings of Canaan
 In Taanach by the waters of Megiddo;
 They took no gain of money.
 They fought from heaven;
 The stars in their courses fought against Sisera.
 The river of Kishon swept them away,
 That ancient river, the river Kishon.
 O ! my soul, thou hast trodden down strength.
 Then were the horsehoofs broken
 By means of the prancings, the prancings of their mighty ones.

Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord,
 Curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof,
 Because they came not to the help of the Lord,
 To the help of the Lord against the mighty.
 Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the
 Kenite be,
 Blessed shall she be above women in the tent.
 He asked water, and she gave him milk;
 She brought forth butter in a lordly dish.
 She put her hand to the nail,
 And her right hand to the workmen's hammer;
 With the hammer she smote Sisera, she smote off his head,
 When she had pierced and stricken through his temples.
 At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down:
 At her feet he bowed, he fell:
 Where he bowed, there he fell down dead.
 The mother of Sisera looked out at a window,
 And cried through the lattice,
 "Why is his chariot so long in coming?"

Why tarry the wheels of his chariots?"
Her wise ladies answered her,
Yea, she returned answer to herself,
"Have they not sped? Have they not divided the prey?
To every man a damsel or two;
To Sisera, a prey of divers colours,
A prey of divers colours of needlework,
Of divers colours of needlework on both sides, meet for
the necks of them that take the spoil?"

So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord:
But let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth
forth in his might.

JUDGES iv, v

2. "THE SWORD OF THE LORD AND OF GIDEON"

The children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years. The hand of Midian prevailed against Israel, and because of the Midianites the children of Israel made them the dens which are in the mountains, and caves and strongholds. So it was, when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the East, even they came up against them; and they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass. For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers for multitude, for both they and their camels were without number; and they entered into the land to destroy it. And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites; and the children of Israel cried unto the Lord.

There came an angel of the Lord, and sat under an oak

which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite; and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the wine-press, to hide it from the Midianites. And the angel of the Lord appeared and said unto him, "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour."

"O my lord," said Gideon, "if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? And where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, 'Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?' But now the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites."

And the Lord looked upon him and said, "Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have not I sent thee?"

"Oh my lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house."

"Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man," the Lord said.

"If now I have found grace in thy sight," said Gideon, "then show me a sign that thou talkest with me. Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present and set it before thee."

"I will tarry until thou come again."

And Gideon went in, and made ready a kid and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour. The flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought it out unto him under the oak, and presented it. And the angel of God said unto him, "Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this rock, and pour out the broth."

And he did so. Then the angel of the Lord put forth an end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh, and the unleavened cakes, and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the Lord departed out of his sight.

When Gideon perceived that he was an angel of the Lord, Gideon said, "Alas, O Lord God! because I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face."

"Peace be unto thee," the Lord said. "Fear not. Thou shalt not die."

And it came to pass the same night that the Lord said unto him, "Take thy father's young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that is by it. Build an altar unto the Lord thy God upon the top of this rock, in the ordered place, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou shalt cut down."

Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as the Lord had said unto him. So it was, because he feared his father's household and the men of the city, that he could not do it by day, that he did it by night. When the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was cast down, and the grove was cut down that was by it, and the second bullock was offered upon the altar that was built. And they said one to another, "Who hath done this thing?" And when they enquired and asked, they said, "Gideon, the son of Joash, hath done this thing."

Then the men of the city said unto Joash, "Bring out thy son, that he may die, because he hath cast down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the grove that was by it."

"Will ye plead for Baal?" said Joash unto all that stood against him, "Will ye save him? He that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst it is yet morning. If he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar." Therefore on that day he called Gideon Jerubbaal, saying, "Let Baal plead against him, because he hath thrown down his altar."

Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the East were gathered together, and went over, and pitched in the valley of Jezreel. But the spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet and sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, and unto Asher, and unto Zebulun, and unto Naphtali; and they came up to meet them.

And Gideon said unto God, "If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said, behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor, and if the dew be on the fleece only and it be dry upon all the earth beside, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said." And it was so; for he rose up early on the morrow, and thrust the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water.

And Gideon said unto God, "Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once. Let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece. Let it be now dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew." And God did so that night; for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground.

Then Gideon, and all the people that were with him, rose up early and pitched beside the well of Harod, so that the host of the Midianites were on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley. And the Lord said unto Gideon, "The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me saying, 'Mine own hand hath saved me.' Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, 'Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead.' " And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand.

And the Lord said, "The people are yet too many. Bring

them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there; and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, 'This shall go with thee,' the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, 'This shall not go with thee', the same shall not go." So he brought down the people unto the water. And the Lord said, "Everyone that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself, likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink." And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men; but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. And the Lord said, "By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand. Let all the other people go, every man unto his place." So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets; and he sent all the rest of Israel, every man unto his tent, and retained those three hundred men. And the host of Midian was beneath him in the valley. The same night the Lord said unto him, "Arise, get thee down unto the host, for I have delivered it into thine hand. But if thou fear to go down, go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the host, and thou shalt hear what they say; and afterward shalt thine hands be strengthened to go down unto the host."

Then went he down with Phurah his servant unto the outside of the armed men that were in the host. And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the East lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the sea side for multitude. And when Gideon was come, behold, there was a man that told a dream unto his fellow, "Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled unto the host of Midian, and came unto a tent and smote it that it fell, and overturned it that the tent lay along."

"This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon, the son

of Joash, a man of Israel, for into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host," his fellow answered.

When Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, he worshipped, and returned into the host of Israel and said, "Arise; for the Lord hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian."

He divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put a trumpet in every man's hand, with empty pitchers and lamps within the pitchers. "Look on me," he said unto them. "And do likewise, and behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be, that as I do, so shall ye do. When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp and say, 'The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon!'"

So Gideon and the hundred men that were with him came unto the outside of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch, and they had but newly set the watch. They blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that were in their hands. And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the lamps in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow withal; and they cried,

"The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon!"

And they stood every man in his place round about the camp, and all the host ran and cried and fled. And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and the Lord set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host: and the host fled to Beth-shittah in Zererath, and to the border of Abel-meholah, unto Tabbath. And the men of Israel gathered themselves together out of Naphtali and out of Asher, and out of all Manasseh, and pursued after the Midianites.

And Gideon sent messengers throughout all Mount

Ephraim, saying, "Come down against the Midianites, and take before them the waters unto Beth-Barah and Jordan." Then all the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together and took the waters unto Beth-Barah and Jordan. And they took two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb. They slew Oreb upon the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb they slew at the wine-press of Zeeb, and pursued Midian and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon, on the other side Jordan.

And the men of Ephraim said unto Gideon, "Why hast thou served us thus, that thou calledst us not when thou wentest to fight with the Midianites?" And they did chide with him sharply.

"What have I done now in comparison of you?" he said unto them. "Is not the gleanings of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abi-ezer? God hath delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb: and what was I able to do in comparison of you?" Then their anger was abated towards him, when he had said that.

Gideon came to Jordan and passed over, he, and the three hundred men that were with him, faint, yet pursuing them. And he said unto the men of Succoth, "Give, I pray you, loaves of bread unto the people that follow me; for they be faint, and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian."

"Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand," said the princes of Succoth, "that we should give bread unto thine army?"

"When the Lord hath delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into mine hand, then I will tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briars," said Gideon. He went up thence to Penuel, and spake unto them likewise: and the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered him, And he spake also unto the men of Penuel,

saying, “When I come again in peace, I will break down this tower.”

Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor, and their hosts with them, about fifteen thousand men, all that were left of all the hosts of the children of the East: for there fell an hundred and twenty thousand men that drew sword. And Gideon went up by the way of them that dwelt in tents on the East of Nobah and Jogbehah, and smote the host, for the host was secure. And when Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued after them, and took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and discomfited all the host. And he returned from battle before the sun was up, and caught a young man of the men of Succoth, and enquired of him, and he described unto him the princes of Succoth, and the elders thereof, even threescore and seventeen men.

And he came unto the men of Succoth, and said, “Behold Zebah and Zalmunna, with whom ye did upbraid me, saying, ‘Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in their hand, that we should give bread unto thy men that are weary?’ ”

And he took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with them he taught the men of Succoth. And he beat down the tower of Penuel, and slew the men of the city.

Then said he unto Zebah and Zalmunna, “What manner of men were they whom ye slew at Tabor?”

“As thou art, so were they,” they answered. “Each one resembled the children of a king.”

“They were my brethren, even the sons of my mother,” said Gideon. “As the Lord liveth, if ye had saved them alive, I would not slay you.” And he said unto Jether his first-born, “Up, and slay them.” But the youth drew not his sword; for he feared, because he was yet a youth.

Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, “Rise thou, and fall upon us; for as the man is, so is his strength,”

And Gideon arose, and slew Zebah and Zalmunna, and took away the ornaments that were on their camels' necks. Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, "Rule thou over us, both thou and thy son, and thy son's son also; for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian." And Gideon said, "I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you. The Lord shall rule over you."

Thus was Midian subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted up their heads no more: and the country was in quietness forty years in the days of Gideon.

JUDGES vi, vii, viii. 1-23, 28

3. ABIMELECH

Gideon had threescore and ten sons of his body begotten: for he had many wives. And his concubine that was in Shechem, she also bare him a son, whose name he called Abimelech. And Abimelech went to Shechem unto his mother's brethren, and communed with them, and with all the family of the house of his mother's father, saying, "Speak, I pray you, in the ears of all the men of Shechem, whether is better for you, either that all the sons of Jerubbaal, which are threescore and ten persons, reign over you, or that one reign over you? Remember also that I am your bone and your flesh."

His mother's brethren spake of him in the ears of all the men of Shechem all these words; and their hearts inclined to follow Abimelech, for they said, "He is our brother." And they gave him threescore and ten pieces of silver out of the house of Baal-berith, wherewith Abimelech hired vain and light persons, which followed him. And he went unto his father's house at Ophrah, and slew his brethren the sons of Jerubbaal, being threescore and ten persons, upon one stone; notwithstanding yet Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal

was left, for he hid himself. And all the men of Shechem gathered together, and all the house of Millo, and went and made Abimelech king, by the plain of the pillar that was in Shechem.

When they told it to Jotham, he went and stood in the top of mount Gerizim, and lifted up his voice and cried, "Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you. The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive tree, 'Reign thou over us.' But the olive tree said unto them, 'Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?' And the trees said to the fig tree, 'Come thou and reign over us.' But the fig tree said unto them, 'Should I forsake my sweetness and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees?' Then said the trees unto the vine, 'Come thou, and reign over us.' And the vine said unto them, 'Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?' Then said all the trees unto the bramble, 'Come thou, and reign over us.' And the bramble said unto the trees, 'If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow; and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon.'

"Now therefore, if ye have done truly and sincerely, in that ye have made Abimelech king, and if ye have dealt well with Jerubbaal and his house, and have done unto him according to the deserving of his hands; (for my father fought for you, and adventured his life far, and delivered you out of the hand of Midian; and ye are risen up against my father's house this day, and have slain his sons, three-score and ten persons, upon one stone, and have made Abimelech, the son of his maid-servant, king over the men of Shechem, because he is your brother); if ye have then dealt truly and sincerely with Jerubbaal and with his house

this day, then rejoice ye in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you; but if not, let fire come out from Abimelech, and devour the men of Shechem, and from the house of Millo, and devour Abimelech." And Jotham ran away, and fled, and went to Beer, and dwelt there, for fear of Abimelech his brother.

When Abimelech had reigned three years over Israel, God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech, that the cruelty done to the threescore and ten sons of Jerubbaal might come, and their blood be laid upon Abimelech their brother, which slew them; and upon the men of Shechem, which aided him in the killing of his brethren.

The men of Shechem set liers in wait for him in the top of the mountains, and they robbed all that came along that way by them: and it was told Abimelech. And Gaal the son of Ebed came with his brethren, and went over to Shechem; and the men of Shechem put their confidence in him. They went out into the fields and gathered their vineyards, and trode the grapes, and made merry, and went into the house of their god, and did eat and drink, and cursed Abimelech.

"Who is Abimelech," said Gaal, "and who is Shechem, that we should serve him? Is not he the son of Jerubbaal? And Zebul his officer? Serve the men of Hamor the father of Shechem; for why should we serve him? Would to God this people were under my hand! then would I remove Abimelech." And he said to Abimelech, "Increase thine army, and come out."

When Zebul the ruler of the city heard the words of Gaal, his anger was kindled, and he sent messengers unto Abimelech privily, saying, "Behold, Gaal the son of Ebed and his brethren be come to Shechem; and, behold, they fortify the city against thee. Now therefore up by night, thou and

the people that is with thee, and lie in wait in the field. In the morning, as soon as the sun is up, thou shalt rise early, and set upon the city: and, behold, when he and the people that is with him come out against thee, then mayest thou do to them as thou shalt find occasion." And Abimelech rose up, and all the people that were with him by night, and they laid wait against Shechem in four companies. And Gaal went out, and stood in the entering of the gate of the city: and Abimelech rose up, and all the people that were with him, from lying in wait.

When Gaal saw the people he said to Zebul, "Behold, there come people down from the top of the mountains."

"Thou seest the shadow of the mountains as if they were men," said Zebul.

Gaal spake again, "See there come people down by the middle of the land, and another company coming along by the plain of Meonenim."

Then said Zebul, "Where is now thy mouth, wherewith thou saidst, 'Who is Abimelech, that we should serve him?' Is not this the people that thou hast despised? Go out, I pray now, and fight with them." And Gaal went out before the men of Shechem, and fought with Abimelech, and Abimelech chased him, and he fled before him; and many were overthrown and wounded, even unto the entering of the gate. And Abimelech dwelt at Arumah; and Zebul thrust out Gaal and his brethren, that they should not dwell in Shechem.

On the morrow, the people went out into the field; and they told Abimelech, and he took the people, and divided them into three companies, and laid wait in the field, and looked, and, behold, the people were come forth out of the city; and he rose up against them, and smote them. And Abimelech, and the company that was with him, rushed

forward, and stood in the entering of the gate of the city: and the two other companies ran upon all the people that were in the fields, and slew them. Abimelech fought against the city all that day; and he took the city, and slew the people that was therein, and beat down the city, and sowed it with salt.¹

When all the men of the tower of Shechem heard that, they entered into an hold of the house of the god Berith, and it was told Abimelech that all the men of the tower of Shechem were gathered together. And Abimelech gat him up to mount Salmon, he and all the people that were with him; and he took an axe in his hand, and cut down a bough from the trees, and took it, and laid it on his shoulder, and said unto the people that were with him, "What ye have seen me do, make haste, and do as I have done." All the people likewise cut down every man his bough, and followed Abimelech, and put them to the hold and set the hold on fire upon them, so that all the men of the tower of Shechem died also, about a thousand men and women.

Then went Abimelech to Thebez, and took it. But there was a strong tower within the city, and thither fled all the men and women, and all they of the city, and shut it to them, and gat them up to the top of the tower. Abimelech came unto the tower, and fought against it, and went hard unto the door of the tower to burn it with fire. And a certain woman cast a piece of a millstone upon Abimelech's head, and all to brake his skull. Then he called hastily into the young man his armour-bearer, and said unto him, "Draw thy sword, and slay me, that men say not of me, 'A woman slew him.'" And his young man thrust him through, and he died, and when the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead, they departed every man unto his place. Thus God rendered the wickedness of Abimelech, which he did unto his

¹ Thus marking it out for perpetual desolation and barrenness.—ED.

father, in slaying his seventy brethren; and all the evil of the men of Shechem did God render upon their heads; and upon them came the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal.

JUDGES viii. 30, 31, ix

4. SHIBBOLETH

The men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, and went northward, and said unto Jephthah, "Wherefore passedst thou over to fight against the children of Ammon, and didst not call us to go with thee? We will burn thine house upon thee with fire."

Jephthah said unto them, "I and my people were at great strife with the children of Ammon; and when I called you, ye delivered me not out of their hands; and when I saw that ye delivered me not, I put my life in my hands, and passed over against the children of Ammon, and the Lord delivered them into my hand. Wherefore then are ye come up unto me this day, to fight against me?"

Then Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead, and fought with Ephraim; and the men of Gilead smote Ephraim, because they said, "Ye Gileadites are fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites, and among the Manassites."

The Gileadites took the passages of Jordan before the Ephraimites, and it was so, that when those Ephraimites which were escaped said, "Let me go over," that the men of Gilead said unto him, "Art thou an Ephraimite?" If he said, "Nay," then said they unto him, "Say now Shibboleth," and he said, "Sibboleth," for he could not frame to pronounce it right. Then they took him, and slew him at the passages of Jordan; and there fell at that time of the Ephraimites forty and two thousand.

JUDGES xii. 1-6

5. JEPHTHAH'S DAUGHTER

Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valour. He was the son of an harlot, and Gilead begat Jephthah; and Gilead's wife bare him sons: and his wife's sons grew up, and they thrust out Jephthah, and said unto him, "Thou shalt not inherit in our father's house; for thou art the son of a strange woman." Then Jephthah fled from his brethren, and dwelt in the land of Tob; and there were gathered vain men to Jephthah, and went out with him.

And it came to pass in process of time, that the children of Ammon made war against Israel. And it was so, that, when the children of Ammon made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead went to fetch Jephthah out of the land of Tob. "Come, and be our captain," they said, "that we may fight with the children of Ammon."

And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, "Did not ye hate me, and expel me out of my father's house? Why are ye come unto me now when ye are in distress?"

"We turn again to thee now," said the elders, "that thou mayest go with us, and fight against the children of Ammon, and be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead."

"If ye bring me home again to fight against the children of Ammon, and the Lord deliver them before me, shall I be your head?" said Jephthah.

"The Lord be witness between us, if we do not so according to thy words."

Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and captain over them; and Jephthah uttered all his words before the Lord in Mizpeh. And he sent messengers unto the king of the children of Ammon, saying, "What hast thou to do with me, that thou art come against me to fight in my land?"

“Because Israel took away my land, when they came up out of Egypt, from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and unto Jordan. Now therefore restore those lands again peaceably,” answered the king of the children of Ammon unto the messengers of Jephthah.

And Jephthah sent messengers again unto the king of the children of Ammon; “Thus saith Jephthah, Israel took not away the land of Moab, nor the land of the children of Ammon. But when Israel came up from Egypt, and walked through the wilderness unto the Red Sea, and came to Kadesh, Israel sent messengers unto the king of Edom, saying, ‘Let me, I pray thee, pass through thy land,’ but the king of Edom would not hearken thereto. And in like manner they sent unto the king of Moab, but he would not consent; and Israel abode in Kadesh. Then they went along through the wilderness, and compassed the land of Edom, and the land of Moab, and came by the East side of the land of Moab, and pitched on the other side of Arnon, but came not within the border of Moab, for Arnon was the border of Moab. And Israel sent messengers unto Sihon king of the Amorites, the king of Heshbon; and Israel said unto him, ‘Let us pass, we pray thee, through thy land into my place.’ But Sihon trusted not Israel to pass through his coast, but gathered all his people together, and pitched in Jahaz, and fought against Israel; and the Lord God of Israel delivered Sihon and all his people into the hand of Israel, and they smote them; so Israel possessed all the land of the Amorites, the inhabitants of that country. They possessed all the coasts of the Amorites, from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and from the wilderness even unto Jordan. So now the Lord God of Israel hath dispossessed the Amorites from before his people Israel, and shouldest thou possess it? Wilt not thou possess that which Chemosh thy god giveth thee to possess? So whomsoever the Lord our God shall drive

out from before us, them will we possess. Art thou anything better than Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab? Did he ever strive against Israel, or did he ever fight against them, while Israel dwelt in Heshbon and her towns and in Aroer and her towns, and in all the cities that be along by the coasts of Arnon, three hundred years? Why therefore did ye not recover them within that time? Wherefore I have not sinned against thee, but thou doest me wrong to war against me. The Lord the Judge be judge this day between the children of Israel and the children of Ammon."

Howbeit the king of the children of Ammon hearkened not unto the words of Jephthah which he sent him.

Then the spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah, and he passed over Gilead and Manasseh, and passed over Mizpeh of Gilead, and from Mizpeh of Gilead he passed over unto the children of Ammon. And he vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, "If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, then whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering." So Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon to fight against them; and the Lord delivered them into his hands. And he smote them with a very great slaughter. Thus the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel.

And Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his house, and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances: and she was his only child, beside her he had neither son nor daughter. And when he saw her, he rent his clothes, and said, "Alas! my daughter, thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me, for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back."

"My father," she said, "if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth, forasmuch as the Lord hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, even of the children of Ammon." And she said, "Let this thing be done for me. Let me alone two months, that I may go up and down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity, I and my fellows."

"Go," he said, and he sent her away for two months, and she went with her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains. At the end of two months she returned unto her father, who did with her according to his vow which he had vowed; and she knew no man. And it was a custom in Israel that the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year.

JUDGES xi

6. "THE PHILISTINES BE UPON THEE, SAMSON"

The children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord: and the Lord delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years.

There was a certain man of Zorah whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren, and bare not. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, "Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not; but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son. Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing. For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head, for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb. And he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines." And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson; and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him. And the

spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.

And Samson went down to Timnath, and saw a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines, and he came up and told his father and his mother, "I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines; now therefore get her for me to wife."

Then his father and his mother said, "Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines?"

"Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well," said Samson to his father. But his father and his mother knew not that it was of the Lord, that he sought an occasion against the Philistines; for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.

Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath, and came to the vineyards of Timnath; and behold, a young lion roared against him. And the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon Samson, and he rent the lion as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand. But he told not his father or his mother what he had done. He went down and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well.

After a time he returned to take her, and he turned aside to see the carcase of the lion; and, behold, there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcase of the lion. He took thereof in his hands and went on, eating, and came to his father and his mother, and he gave them and they did eat. But he told not them he had taken the honey out of the carcase of the lion. So his father went down unto the woman and Samson made there a feast; for so used the young men to do. And when the Philistines saw him, they brought thirty companions to be with him.

"I will now put forth a riddle unto you," Samson said. "If ye can certainly declare it me within the seven days of the feast, and find it out, then I will give you thirty shirts and thirty change of garments; but if ye cannot declare it me then shall ye give me thirty shirts and thirty change of garments."

"Put forth thy riddle, that we may hear it," they said.

"Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness," said Samson. They could not in three days expound the riddle, and on the seventh day, they said unto Samson's wife, "Entice thy husband, that he may declare unto us the riddle, lest we burn thee and thy father's house with fire. Have ye called us to take that we have? Is it not so?"

And Samson's wife wept before him, and said, "Thou dost but hate me, and lovest me not. Thou hast put forth a riddle unto the children of my people, and hast not told it me."

"Behold, I have not told it my father nor my mother, and shall I tell it thee?" said he.

She wept before him the seven days, while their feast lasted. On the seventh day he told her, because she lay sore upon him; and she told the riddle unto the children of her people. And the men of the city said unto him on the seventh day before the sun went down, "What is sweeter than honey? And what is stronger than a lion?"

"If ye had not plowed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle," said he.

And the spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon, and slew thirty men of them and took their spoil, and gave change of garments unto them which expounded the riddle. And his anger was kindled, and he went up to his father's house. Samson's wife was given to his companion, whom he had used as his friend, but within a while after, in the time of the wheat harvest, Samson visited his wife with a kid, and he said, "I will go in to my wife into

the chamber," but her father would not suffer Samson to go in.

"I verily thought that thou hadst utterly hated her," he said. "Therefore I gave her to thy companion. Is not her younger sister fairer than she? Take her, I pray thee, instead."

And Samson said concerning them, "This time shall I be blameless in regard of the Philistines when I do them a mischief." And he went and caught three hundred foxes, and took firebrands, and turned tail to tail, and put a firebrand in the midst between two tails. When he had set the brands on fire, he let them go into the standing corn of the Philistines and burnt up both the shocks and also the standing corn with the vineyards and olives.

Then the Philistines said, "Who hath done this?"

"Samson," they answered, "the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he had taken Samson's wife and given her to his companion." And the Philistines came up and burnt her and her father with fire.

"Though ye have done this," Samson said unto them, "yet will I be avenged of you, and after that I will cease." And he smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter; and he went down and dwelt in the top of the rock Etam. Then the Philistines went up, and pitched in Judah, and spread themselves in Lehi.

"Why are ye come up against us?" said the men of Judah.

"To bind Samson are we come up, to do to him as he hath done to us," answered the Philistines.

Then three thousand men of Judah went to the top of the rock Etam, and said to Samson, "Knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us? What is this that thou hast done unto us?"

"As they did unto me, so have I done unto them," Samson said.

And they said unto him, "We are come down to bind thee, that we may deliver thee into the hand of the Philistines."

"Swear unto me, that ye will not fall upon me yourselves," said Samson.

"No, but we will bind thee fast, and deliver thee into their hand, but surely we will not kill thee," and they bound him with two new cords, and brought him up from the rock, and when he came unto Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him. And the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and the cords that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands loosed from off his hands. And he found a new jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hand and took it, and slew a thousand men therewith, and said:—

"With the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps,
With the jawbone of an ass have I slain a thousand
men."

And when he had made an end of speaking, he cast away the jawbone out of his hand. And he was sore athirst, and called on the Lord, and said, "Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant; and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised?" But God clave an hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water thereout, and when Samson had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived.

Then went Samson to Gaza, and saw there an harlot and went in unto her. And it was told the Gazites, "Samson is come hither," and they compassed him in, and laid wait for him all night in the gate of the city, and were quiet all the night, saying, "In the morning when it is day, we shall kill him." And Samson lay till midnight, and arose at midnight, and took the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and went away with them, bar and all, and put them upon his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of an hill, that is before Hebron.

It came to pass afterward, that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah. And the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and said unto her, "Entice him, and see wherein his great strength lies, and by what means we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to afflict him; and we will give thee, every one of us, eleven hundred pieces of silver."

And Delilah said to Samson, "Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength lieth, and wherewith thou mightest be bound to afflict thee."

"If they bind me with seven green withs that were never dried, then shall I be weak and be as another man," Samson said unto her.

Then the lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven green withs which had not been dried, and she bound him with them. Now there were men lying in wait, abiding with her in the chamber. And she said unto him, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson!"

And he brake the withs, as a thread of tow is broken when it toucheth the fire. So his strength was not known.

"Behold, thou hast mocked me," Delilah said unto Samson, "and told me lies. Now tell me, I pray thee, wherewith thou mightest be bound."

And he said unto her, "If they bind me fast with new ropes that never were occupied, then shall I be weak and be as another man." Delilah therefore took new ropes, and bound him therewith, and said unto him, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson!"

And there were liers in wait abiding in the chamber, and he brake them from off his arms like a thread.

"Hitherto thou hast mocked me, and told me lies," Delilah said. "Tell me wherewith thou mightest be bound."

"If thou weavest the seven locks of my head with the web."

And she fastened it with the pin and said unto him, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson!"

And he awaked out of his sleep, and went away with the pin of the beam and with the web.

And she said unto him, "How canst thou say, 'I love thee,' when thine heart is not with me? Thou hast mocked me these three times, and hast not told me wherein thy great strength lieth." And when she pressed him daily with her words and urged him, so that his soul was vexed unto death, he told her all his heart, and said unto her, "There hath not come a razor upon mine head, for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb. If I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man."

And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, "Come up this once, for he hath showed me all his heart." Then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and brought money in their hands. And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him and his strength went from him. And she said, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson!" And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, "I will go out as at other times before and shake myself." And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him. But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house. Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again after he was shaven.

Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice; for they said, "Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hands." And when the people saw him

they praised their god, for they said, "Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, which slew many of us." And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, "Call for Samson, that he may make us sport." And they called for Samson out of the prison house; and he made them sport; and they set him between the pillars.

And Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand, "Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them."

Now the house was full of men and women. All the lords of the Philistines were there and there were upon the roof about three thousand men and women that beheld while Samson made sport.

And Samson called unto the Lord, "O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes." And Samson took told of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other, with his left.

And Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines." And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life.

JUDGES xiii. 1-5, 24, xiv, xv, xvi. 1-30

7. MICAH AND THE DANITES

There was a man of mount Ephraim, whose name was Micah, and he said unto his mother, "The eleven hundred shekels of silver that were taken from thee, about which

thou cursedst, and spakest of also in mine ears, behold, the silver is with me. I took it."

And his mother said, "Blessed be thou of the Lord, my son."

When he had restored the eleven hundred shekels of silver to his mother, she said, "I had wholly dedicated the silver unto the Lord from my hand for my son, to make a graven image, and a molten image. Now therefore I will restore it unto thee."

Yet he restored the money unto his mother, and his mother took two hundred shekels of silver, and gave them to the founder, who made thereof a graven image and a molten image, and they were in the house of Micah. And the man Micah had an house of gods, and made an ephod, and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest. In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes. And there was a young man out of Bethlehem-judah, who was a Levite, and he sojourned there. And he departed out of the city from Bethlehem-judah, to sojourn where he could find a place; and he came to mount Ephraim, to the house of Micah, as he journeyed.

"Whence comest thou?" Micah said unto him.

"I am a Levite of Bethlehem-judah, and I go to sojourn where I may find a place."

"Dwell with me," Micah said. "And be unto me a father and a priest, and I will give thee ten shekels of silver by the year, and a suit of apparel, and thy victuals."

So the Levite went in, and was content to dwell with the man; and the young man was unto Micah as one of his sons. And Micah consecrated the Levite; and the young man became his priest, and was in the house of Micah. Then said Micah, "Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest."

In those days the tribe of the Danites sought them an inheritance to dwell in; for unto that day all their inheritance had not fallen unto them among the tribes of Israel. The children of Dan sent of their family five men from their coasts, men of valour, from Zorah and from Eshtaol, to spy out the land and to search it; and they said unto them, "Go, search the land"; who when they came to mount Ephraim, to the house of Micah, they lodged there. And when they were by the house of Micah, they knew the voice of the young man the Levite: and they turned in thither, and said unto him, "Who brought thee hither? And what makest thou in this place? And what hast thou here?"

He said, "Thus and thus dealeth Micah with me, and hath hired me, and I am his priest."

"Ask counsel, we pray thee, of God, that we may know whether our way which we go shall be prosperous."

"Go in peace," said the priest. "Before the Lord is your way wherein ye go."

Then the five men departed, and came to Laish, and saw the people that were therein, how they dwelt careless, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure; and there was no magistrate in the land that might put them to shame in anything; and they were far from the Zidonians, and had no business with any man. And they came unto their brethren to Zorah and Eshtaol; and their brethren said unto them, "What say ye?"

"Arise, that we may go up against them," they said. "For we have seen the land, and, behold, it is very good. And are ye still? Be not slothful to go, and to enter to possess the land. When ye go, ye shall come unto a people secure, and to a large land, for God hath given it into your hands; a place where there is no want of anything that is in the earth."

And there went from thence of the family of the Danites, out of Zorah and out of Eshtaol, six hundred men appointed

with weapons of war. They went up, and pitched in Kirjath-jearim, in Judah; and they passed thence unto mount Ephraim, and came unto the house of Micah. Then answered the five men that went to spy out the country of Laish, and said unto their brethren, "Do ye know that there is in these houses an ephod, and teraphim, and a graven image, and a molten image? Now therefore consider what ye have to do."

They turned thitherward, and came to the house of the young man the Levite, even unto the house of Micah, and saluted him. And the six hundred men appointed with their weapons of war, which were of the children of Dan, stood by the entering of the gate; and the five men that went to spy out the land went up, and came in thither, and took the graven image, and the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image; and the priest stood in the entering of the gate with the six hundred men that were appointed with weapons of war. These went into Micah's house, and fetched the carved image, the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image.

Then said the priest, "What do ye?"

"Hold thy peace," they said. "Lay thine hand upon thy mouth, and go with us, and be to us a father and a priest. Is it better for thee to be a priest unto the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel?"

And the priest's heart was glad; and he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image and went in the midst of the people. So they turned and departed, and put the little ones and the cattle and the carriage before them. And when they were a good way from the house of Micah, the men that were in the houses near to Micah's house were gathered together, and overtook the children of Dan. And they cried unto the children of Dan, who turned their faces, and said unto Micah, "What aileth thee, that thou comest with such a company?"

"Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest,

and ye are gone away; and what have I more? And what is this that ye say unto me, What aileth thee?" Micah said.

"Let not thy voice be heard among us, lest angry fellows run upon thee, and thou lose thy life, with the lives of thy household," the children of Dan said unto him, and they went their way: and when Micah saw that they were too strong for him, he turned and went back unto his house.

They took the things which Micah had made, and the priest which he had, and came unto Laish, unto a people that were at quiet and secure: and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and burnt the city with fire. And there was no deliverer, because it was far from Zidon, and they had no business with any man; and it was in the valley that lieth by Beth-rehob. They built a city, and dwelt therein, and called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father, who was born unto Israel: howbeit the name of the city was Laish at the first.

The children of Dan set up the graven image, and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manassch, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of captivity of the land. And they set them up Micah's graven image, which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.

JUDGES xvii, xviii

R U T H

Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land, and a certain man of Bethlehem-judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. The name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, and they came into the country of Moab, and continued there. Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left, and her two sons; and they took them wives of the women of Moab, the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth; and they dwelt there about ten years. Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband. Then she arose with her daughters-in-law, that she might return from the country of Moab; for she heard in the country of Moab how that the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread. Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on their way to return unto the land of Judah.

And Naomi said unto her daughters-in-law, "Go, return each to her mother's house. The Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me. The Lord grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband." Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voice and wept.

"Surely we will return with thee unto thy people," they said unto her.

"Turn again, my daughters," said Naomi. "Why will ye go with me? Are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say I have hope, if I should have an husband also to-night,

and should also bare sons, would ye tarry for them till they were grown? Would you stay for them from having husbands? Nay my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes, that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me."

They lifted up their voice and wept. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth clave unto her, and Naomi said, "Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods. Return thou after thy sister-in-law."

And Ruth said, "Entreat me not to leave thee; or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go, and where thou lodgest, I will lodge. Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me."

When Naomi saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her. So they two went until they came to Bethlehem, and it came to pass when they were come to Bethlehem that all the city was moved about them, and they said, "Is this Naomi?"

"Call me not Naomi," she said unto them, "call me Mara, for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty. Why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me and the Almighty hath afflicted me?"

So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab; and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest. And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz, and Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, "Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace."

"Go, my daughter."

Ruth went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the

reapers, and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech. And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, "The Lord be with you."

And they answered him, "The Lord bless thee."

Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, "Whose damsel is this?"

"It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab," answered the servant. "And she said, 'I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.' So she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house."

Then said Boaz unto Ruth, "Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens. Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them. Have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? And when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn."

Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said, "Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?"

"It hath fully been showed me all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thine husband," answered Boaz, "and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore. The Lord recompence thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust."

"Let me find favour in thy sight, my lord," said Ruth, "for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaid, though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens."

"At meal-time come thou hither, and eat of the bread," said Boaz unto her, "and dip thy morsel in the vinegar."

And she sat beside the reapers, and he reached her parched corn, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left. And when she had risen up to glean Boaz commanded his young men, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not; and let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them, and rebuke her not." So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned; and it was about an ephah of barley; and she took it up, and went into the city, and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned; and she brought forth, and gave to her that she had reserved after she was sufficed.

"Where hast thou gleaned to-day?" said her mother-in-law. "And where wroughtest thou? Blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee." And Ruth showed her mother-in-law with whom she had wrought, and said, "The man's name with whom I wrought to-day is Boaz."

"Blessed be he of the Lord, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead," said Naomi. "The man is near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen."

"He said unto me also, 'Thou shalt keep fast by my young men, until they have ended all my harvest,'" said Ruth.

"It is good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that they may meet thee not in any other field," Naomi said. So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest; and dwelt with her mother-in-law.

Then Naomi her mother-in-law said unto her, "My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be wel with thee? And now is not Boaz of our kindred, with whose maidens thou wast? Behold, he winnoweth barley to-night in the threshing-floor. Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to

the floor; but make not thyself known unto the man, until he shall have done eating and drinking. And it shall be, when he lieth down, that thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie, and thou shalt go in, and uncover his feet, and lay thee down: and he will tell thee what thou shalt do."

And Ruth said unto her, "All that thou sayest unto me I will do." And she went down unto the floor, and did according to all that her mother-in-law bade her. And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn; and Ruth came softly, and uncovered his feet, and laid her down. And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and turned himself: and, behold, a woman lay at his feet.

"Who art thou?" he said.

"I am Ruth thine handmaid. Spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman."

"Blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter," he said. "Thou hast shewn more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, in as much as thou followest not young men, whether poor or rich. And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest, for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman. And now it is true that I am thy near kinsman, howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I. Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, that if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well; let him do the kinsman's part; but if he will not do the part of the kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of the kinsman to thee, as the Lord liveth. Lie down until the morning."

And she lay at his feet until the morning, and rose up before one could know another. And he said, "Let it not be known that a woman came into the floor." Also he said, "Bring the veil that thou hast upon thee, and hold it." And when she held it, he measured six measures of barley, and

laid it on her, and she went into the city. When she came to her mother-in-law, Naomi said, "Who art thou, my daughter?"

And Ruth told her all that the man had done to her, and said, "These six measures of barley gave he me; for he said to me, 'Go not empty unto thy mother-in-law.'"

Then said Naomi, "Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall. The man will not be in rest until he have finished the thing this day."

Then went Boaz up to the gate and sat him down there. And behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by; unto whom he said, "Ho, such a one! Turn aside, sit down here." And he turned aside and sat down, and Boaz took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, "Sit ye down here." And they sat down. And Boaz said unto the kinsman, "Naomi, that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land, which was our brother Elimelech's. And I thought to advertise thee, saying, 'Buy it,' before the inhabitants and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it; but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me that I may know, for there is none to redeem it beside thee, and I am after thee."

And he said, "I will redeem it."

Then said Boaz, "What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance."

"I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar my own inheritance," said the kinsman. "Redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem it."

Now this was the manner in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning changing, for to confirm all things, a man plucked off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbour: and this was a testimony in Israel. Therefore the

kinsman said unto Boaz, "Buy it for thee." So he drew off his shoe. And Boaz said unto the elders, and unto all the people, "Ye are witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech's and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi. Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance; that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place. Ye are witnesses this day."

And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, "We are witnesses. The Lord make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel. And do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem. And let thy house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah, of the seed which the Lord shall give thee of this young woman."

So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife; and when he went in unto her, the Lord gave her conception, and she bare a son. And the women said unto Naomi, "Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel. He shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age: for thy daughter-in-law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath born him." And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it; and the women, her neighbours, gave it a name, saying, "There is a son born to Naomi." And they called his name Obed, and he is the father of Jesse, the father of David.

S A M U E L

i. LENT UNTO THE LORD

Now there was a certain man and his name was Elkanah, and he had two wives. The name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah; and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children. This man went up out of his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto the Lord of hosts in Shiloh, and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the Lord, were there. When the time was that Elkanah offered, he gave to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and her daughters portions; but unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion; for he loved Hannah. But the Lord had shut up her womb. Her adversary also provoked her sore for to make her fret because the Lord had shut up her womb. And as he did so, year by year, when she went up to the house of the Lord, so Peninnah provoked her; therefore she wept, and did not eat.

Then said Elkanah her husband, "Hannah, why weepest thou? And why eatest thou not? And why is thy heart grieved? Am not I better to thee than ten sons?"

So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. (Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the Lord.) And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore, and she vowed a vow, and said, "O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man-child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head."

And as she continued praying before the Lord, Eli marked

her mouth. Now Hannah she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard; therefore Eli thought she had been drunken, and said unto her, "How long wilt thou be drunken? Put away thy wine from thee."

"No, my lord," Hannah answered, "I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord. Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial, for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto."

Then Eli answered, "Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him."

"Let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight," said Hannah. So she went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad.

They rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the Lord, and returned and came to their house to Ramah; and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and the Lord remembered her. Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel saying, "Because I have asked him of the Lord."

The man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer unto the Lord the yearly sacrifice, and his vow; but Hannah went not up, for she said unto her husband, "I will not go up until the child be weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the Lord, and there abide for ever."

"Do what seemeth thee good," said Elkanah. "Tarry until thou have weaned him; only the Lord establish his word."

So the woman abode, and gave her son suck until she weaned him. And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the Lord in Shiloh; and the child was young. They slew a bullock, and

brought the child to Eli, and she said, "Oh, my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the Lord. For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him. Therefore also have I lent him to the Lord. As long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord."

Eli worshipped the Lord there, and Hannah prayed and said:

My heart rejoiceth in the Lord:
Mine horn is exalted in the Lord:
My mouth is enlarged over mine enemies;
Because I rejoice in thy salvation.
There is none holy as the Lord:
For there is none besides thee;
Neither is there any rock like our God.
Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy
come out of your mouth:
For the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions
are weighed.
The bows of the mighty men are broken.
And they that stumbled are girded with strength.
They that were full have hired out themselves for bread;
And they that were hungry ceased:
So that the barren hath born seven;
And she that hath many children is waxed feeble.
The Lord killeth, and maketh alive:
He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.
The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich:
He bringeth low, and lifteth up.
He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the
beggar from the dunghill,
To set them among princes, and to make them inherit the
throne of glory:

For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them.

He will keep the feet of his saints,
And the wicked shall be silent in darkness;
For by strength shall no man prevail.
The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces;
Out of heaven shall he thunder upon them:
The Lord shall judge the ends of the earth;
And he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed.

I SAMUEL i, ii. 1-10

2. "THE GLORY IS DEPARTED"

Samuel ministered before the Lord, being a child, girded with a linen ephod. Moreover, his mother made him a little coat, and brought it to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife and said, "The Lord give thee seed of this woman, for the loan which is lent to the Lord." And they went unto their own home, and the Lord visited Hannah, so that she conceived and bare three sons and two daughters.

The child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli; and the word of the Lord was precious in those days, and there was no open vision. And it came to pass at that time when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see, and ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep, that the Lord called Samuel; and he answered, "Here am I."

He ran unto Eli, and said, "Here am I; for thou calledst me."

And Eli said, "I called not, lie down again." And he went and lay down.

And the Lord called yet again, "Samuel!"

And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here am I; for thou didst call me."

"I called not, my son; lie down again."

Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him. And the Lord called Samuel again, the third time, and he arose and went to Eli and said, "Here am I; for thou didst call me."

Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child; therefore he said unto Samuel, "Go, lie down. And it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, 'Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth.' "

So Samuel went and lay down in his place. And the Lord came, and stood and called as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" Then Samuel answered, "Speak, for thy servant heareth."

And the Lord said to Samuel, "Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of everyone that heareth it shall tingle. In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house. When I begin, I will also make an end. For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth, because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. Therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever."

Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of the Lord; and Samuel feared to show Eli the vision.

Then Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son."

"Here am I," he answered.

"What is the thing that the Lord hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide it not from me. God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide anything from me of all the things that he

said unto thee." And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him.

And Eli said, "It is the Lord. Let him do what seemeth him good." And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and Samuel did let none of his words fall to the ground; and all Israel, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord. And the word of Samuel came to all Israel.

Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and pitched beside Ebenezer; and the Philistines pitched in Aphek, and put themselves in array against Israel; and when they joined battle, Israel was smitten before the Philistines, and they slew of the army in the field about four thousand men. And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, "Wherefore hath the Lord smitten us to-day before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of Shiloh unto us, that, when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies."

So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth between the cherubim; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God. And when the ark of the covenant of the Lord came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again.

When the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, "What meaneth the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews?" And they understood that the ark of the Lord was come into the camp. And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, "God is come into the camp. Woe unto us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore. Woe unto us! Who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty gods? These are the gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness. Be strong, and quit yourselves

like men, O ye Philistines! that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you. Quit yourselves like men and fight."

And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man into his tent; and there was a very great slaughter, for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen, and the ark of God was taken, and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.

There ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and came to Shiloh the same day, with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head. And when he came, lo, Eli sat upon a seat by the wayside watching, for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city, and told it, all the city cried out.

When Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said, "What meaneth the noise of this tumult?" And the man came in hastily, and told Eli, "I am he that came out of the army, and I fled to-day out of the army." Now Eli was ninety and eight years old, and his eyes were dim, that he could not see, and he said, "What is there done, my son?"

"Israel is fled before the Philistines," the messenger answered. "There hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead; and the ark of God is taken."

And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that Eli fell from off his seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died; for he was an old man, and heavy. He had judged Israel forty years. His daughter-in-law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, near to be delivered, and when she heard the tidings that the ark of God was taken, and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and travailed, for her pains came upon her. And about the time of her death the women that stood by her said unto her, "Fear not; for thou hast born

a son." But she answered not, neither did she regard it, and she named the child I-chabod, saying, "The glory is departed from Israel," because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father-in-law and her husband. And she said, "The glory is departed from Israel; for the ark of God is taken."

I SAMUEL ii. 18-21, iii. 1 to 20, iv

3. "GOD SAVE THE KING"

Now it came to pass when Samuel was old, that he made his sons, Joel and Abiah, judges over Israel, and his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment. Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, and said unto him, "Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations."

But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." And Samuel prayed unto the Lord. And the Lord said unto Samuel, "Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee, for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee. Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them."

And Samuel told all the words of the Lord unto the people that asked of him a king. "This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you," he said. "He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be

his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots. He will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots. He will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. He will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. He will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. And he will take your menservants, and your maid-servants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants. And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the Lord will not hear you in that day."

Nevertheless, the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel: and they said, "Nay; but we will have a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles."

And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of the Lord, and the Lord said to Samuel, "Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king."

Now there was a man of Benjamin, whose name was Kish; and he had a son, whose name was Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly. There was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he; from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people.

The asses of Kish, Saul's father, were lost, and Kish said unto Saul, his son, "Take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses."

Saul passed through mount Ephraim, and passed through the land of Shalisha, but they found them not. Then they passed through the land of Shalim, and there they were not;

and he passed through the land of the Benjamites, but they found them not. When they were come to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant that was with him, "Come, and let us return; lest my father leave caring for the asses, and take thought for us."

"Behold now," said the servant, "there is in this city a man of God, and he is an honourable man. All that he saith cometh surely to pass. Now let us go thither; peradventure he can show us our way that we should go."

"But, behold, if we go, what shall we bring the man?" said Saul, "for the bread is spent in our vessels, and there is not a present to bring to the man of God. What have we?"

"Behold, I have here at hand the fourth part of a shekel of silver: that will I give to the man of God to tell us our way," said the servant.

"Well said. Come, let us go," said Saul. So they went unto the city where the man of God was, and as they went up the hill to the city, they found young maidens going out to draw water, and said unto them, "Is the seer here?"

They answered, "He is; behold he is before you. Make haste now, for he came to-day to the city; for there is a sacrifice of the people to-day in the high place. As soon as ye be come into the city, ye shall straightway find him, before he go up to the high place to eat. The people will not eat until he come, because he doth bless the sacrifice, and afterwards they eat that be bidden. Now therefore get ye up, for about this time ye shall find him." And they went up into the city; and when they were come into the city, behold, Samuel came out against them, for to go up to the high place.

Now the Lord had told Samuel in his ear a day before Saul came, "To-morrow, about this time, I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel, and he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines; for I have looked

upon my people, because their cry is come unto me." And when Samuel saw Saul, the Lord said unto him, "Behold the man whom I spake to thee of! This same shall reign over my people."

Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, "Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is."

And Samuel answered Saul, "I am the seer. Go up before me unto the high place, for ye shall eat with me to-day; and to-morrow I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that is in thine heart. As for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them, for they are found. And on whom is all the desire of Israel? Is it not on thee, and on all thy father's house?"

"Am I not a Benjamite," Saul answered, "of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? And my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Wherefore then speakest thou so to me?"

And Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them into the parlour, and made them sit in the chieffest place among them that were bidden, which were about thirty persons. And Samuel said unto the cook, "Bring the portion which I gave thee, of which I said unto thee, 'Set it by thee.' "

The cook took up the shoulder, and that which was upon it, and set it before Saul; and Samuel said, "Behold that which is reserved! Set it before thee, and eat; for unto this time hath it been kept for thee since I said, 'I have invited the people.' "

So Saul did eat with Samuel that day, and when they were come down from the high place into the city, Samuel communed with Saul upon the top of the house, and they arose early, and about the spring of the day Samuel called Saul to the top of the house, saying, "Up, that I may send thee away." And Saul arose, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel, abroad; and as they were going down to the

end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, "Bid the servant pass on before us" (and he passed on). "But stand thou still a while, that I may show thee the word of God."

Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head and kissed him, and said, "Is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance? When thou art departed from me to-day, then thou shalt find two men by Rachel's sepulchre, in the border of Benjamin, at Zelzah; and they will say unto thee, 'The asses which thou wentest to seek are found; and, lo, thy father hath left the care of the asses, and sorroweth for you, saying, 'What shall I do for my son?' Then shalt thou go on forward from thence, and thou shalt come to the plain of Tabor, and there shall meet thee three men going up to God to Bethel, one carrying three kids, and another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine. And they will salute thee, and give thee two loaves of bread; which thou shalt receive of their hands. After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where is the garrison of the Philistines, and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery and a tabret and a pipe and a harp before them; and they shall prophesy. And the spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man. And when these signs are come unto thee, thou do as occasion serve thee; for God is with thee. Thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal; and behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings. Seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and show thee what thou shalt do."

And it was so that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart; and all these signs came to pass that day. When they came thither to the

hill, behold, a company of prophets met him, and the spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them. And when all that knew him beforetime saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets, then the people said one to another, "What is this that is come unto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?"

And when he had made an end of prophesying, he came to the high place, and Saul's uncle said unto him, and to his servant, "Whither went ye?"

"To seek the asses," Saul said, "and when we saw that they were nowhere, we came to Samuel."

"Tell me, I pray thee, what Samuel said unto you."

"He told us plainly that the asses were found," said Saul unto his uncle; but of the matter of the kingdom whereof Samuel spake, he told him not.

Samuel called the people together unto the Lord to Mizpeh, and said unto the children of Israel, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, 'I have brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all kingdoms, and of them that oppressed you. And ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto him, "Nay, but set a king over us." Now therefore present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes, and by your thousands.'" And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was taken. When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was taken and Saul the son of Kish was taken, and when they sought him, he could not be found. Therefore they enquired of the Lord further, if the man should yet come thither. And the Lord answered, "Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff."

And they ran and fetched him thence. And when he stood

among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upwards. And Samuel said unto all the people, "See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people?"

And all the people shouted and said, "God save the king."

I SAMUEL viii, ix, x. 1 to 24

4. THE BATTLE OF MICHMASH

Saul took the kingdom over Israel, and fought against all his enemies on every side, and whithersoever he turned himself, he vexed them. Now the sons of Saul were Jonathan, and Ishui, and Melchishua: and the names of his two daughters were these; the name of the first-born Merab and the name of the younger Michal. And the name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz; and the name of the captain of his host was Abner, the son of Ner, Saul's uncle. And there was sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul; and when Saul saw any strong man, or any valiant man, he took him unto him.

Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel, Saul chose him three thousand men of Israel; whereof two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in mount Beth-el, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin, and the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent. Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba; and the Philistines heard of it. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, "Let the Hebrews hear." And all Israel heard say that Saul had smitten a garrison of the Philistines, and that Israel also was had in abomination with the Philistines. And the people were called together after Saul to Gilgal.

The Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen

and people as the sand which is on the seashore in multitude and they came up, and pitched in Michmash, eastward from Beth-aven.

When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait (for the people were distressed), then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits; and some of the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling. Saul and Jonathan his son, and the people that were present with them abode in Gibeah of Benjamin; but the Philistines encamped in Michmash. And the spoilers came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies. One company turned unto the way that leadeth to Ophrah, unto the land of Shual, and another company turned the way to Beth-horon, and another company turned to the way of the border that looketh to the valley of Zeboim towards the wilderness.

Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel; for the Philistines said, "Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears"; but all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock. Yet they had a file for the mattocks, and for the coulters, and for the forks, and for the axes, and to sharpen the goads. So it came to pass, in the day of the battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan; but with Saul and with Jonathan his son, was there found. And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the passage of Michmash.

It came to pass upon a day that Jonathan the son of Saul said unto the young man that bare his armour, "Come, and let us go over to the Philistines' garrison, that is on the other side." But he told not his father. And Saul tarried in the uttermost part of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree, and the

people that were with him were about six hundred men. And the people knew not that Jonathan was gone.

Between the passages, by which Jonathan sought to go over unto the Philistines' garrison, there was a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other side; and the name of one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh. The forefront of the one was situate northward over against Michmash, and the other southward over against Gilbeah. And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armour, "Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcized. It may be that the Lord will work for us, for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few."

"Do all that is in thine heart; turn thee, behold, I am with thee according to thy heart," said his armour-bearer.

Then said Jonathan, "Behold, we will pass over unto these men, and we will discover ourselves unto them. If they say thus unto us, 'Tarry until we come to you'; then we will stand still in our place, and will not go up unto them. But if they say thus, 'Come up unto us,' then we will go up, for the Lord hath delivered them into our hands, and this shall be a sign unto us."

Both of them discovered themselves unto the garrison of the Philistines; and the Philistines said, "Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they had hid themselves"; and the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armour-bearer and said, "Come up to us, and we will show you a thing."

"Come up after me, for the Lord hath delivered them into the hand of Israel," said Jonathan unto his armour-bearer; and he climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet and his armour-bearer after him; and the Philistines fell before Jonathan; and his armour-bearer slew after him. That first slaughter, which Jonathan and his armour-bearer made, was

about twenty men, within as it were an half an acre of land, which a yoke of oxen might plow. And there was trembling in the host, in the field, and among all the people. The garrison, and the spoilers, they also trembled, and the earth quaked; so it was a very great trembling.

And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeal of Benjamin looked; and, behold, the multitude melted away, and they went on beating down one another. Then said Saul unto the people that were with him, "Number now, and see who is gone from us." And when they had numbered, behold, Jonathan and his armour-bearer were not there. And Saul said unto Ahiah, "Bring hither the ark of God"; and while Saul talked unto the priest, the noise that was in the host of the Philistines went on and increased; and Saul said unto the priest, "Withdraw thine hand."

And Saul and all the people that were with him assembled themselves, and they came to the battle and behold, every man's sword was against his fellow, and there was a very great discomfiture. Moreover, the Hebrews that were with the Philistines before that time, which went up with them into the camp from the country round about, even they also turned to be with the Israelites that were with Saul and Jonathan. Likewise all the men of Israel which had hid themselves in mount Ephraim, when they heard that the Philistines fled, even they also followed hard after them in the battle. So the Lord saved Israel that day; and the battle passed over unto Beth-aven.

The men of Israel were distressed that day, for Saul had adjured the people, saying, "Cursed be the man that eateth any food until evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies." So none of the people tasted any food. And all they of the land came to a wood. There was honey upon the ground, and when the people were come into the wood, behold, the honey dropped; but no man put his hand to his

mouth, for the people feared the oath. But Jonathan heard not when his father charged the people with the oath; wherefore he put forth the end of the rod that was in his hand, and dipped it in an honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his eyes were enlightened.

Then answered one of the people, and said, "Thy father straitly charged the people with an oath, saying, 'Cursed be the man that eateth any food this day.' " And the people were faint.

Then said Jonathan, "My father hath troubled the land. See, I pray you, how my eyes have been enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey. How much more, if haply the people had eaten freely to-day of the spoil of their enemies which they found? For had there not been now a much greater slaughter among the Philistines?"

They smote the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon; and the people were very faint, and they flew upon the spoil, and took sheep, and oxen, and calves, and slew them on the ground, and did eat them with the blood. Then they told Saul, "Behold the people sin against the Lord, in that they eat with the blood."

And Saul said, "Disperse yourselves among the people, and say unto them, 'Bring me hither every man his ox, and every man his sheep, and slay them here, and eat; and sin not against the Lord in eating with the blood.' " And all the people brought every man his ox with him that night, and slew them there. And Saul built an altar unto the Lord; the same was the first altar that he built unto the Lord.

"Let us go down after the Philistines by night," said Saul, "and spoil them unto the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them."

And they said, "Do whatsoever seemeth good unto thee."

Then said the priest, "Let us draw near hither unto God."

And Saul asked counsel of God, "Shall I go down after

the Philistines? Wilt thou deliver them into the hand of Israel?" But God answered him not that day.

"Draw ye near hither all the chief of the people; and know and see wherein this sin hath been this day. For, as the Lord liveth, which saith Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die," said Saul. But there was not a man among all the people that answered him. Then said he unto all Israel, "Be ye on one side, and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side."

"Do what seemeth good unto thee," the people said.

Therefore Saul said unto the Lord God of Israel, "Give a perfect lot." And Saul and Jonathan were taken; but the people escaped. And Saul said, "Cast lots between me and Jonathan my son." And Jonathan was taken.

Then Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me what thou hast done."

And Jonathan told him, "I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that was in mine hand, and, lo, I must die."

"God do so and more also; for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan," answered Saul.

And the people said unto Saul, "Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid. As the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for he hath wrought with God this day." So the people rescued Jonathan that he died not. Then Saul went up from following the Philistines; and the Philistines went to their own place.

1 SAMUEL XIV. 47, 49, 50, 52; XIII. 1-7, 16-23; XIV. 1-46

5. "TO OBEY IS BETTER THAN SACRIFICE"

Samuel said unto Saul, "The Lord sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel; now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the word of the Lord. Thus saith the

Lord of hosts, 'I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and sucking, ox and sheep, camel and ass.' " And Saul gathered the people together, and mustered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand men of Judah, and came to the city of Amalek, and laid wait in the valley. And Saul said unto the Kenites, "Go, depart; get you down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them; for ye showed kindness to all the children of Israel when they came up out of Egypt." So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites.

Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah until thou comest to Shur, that is over against Egypt. He took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the failings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them; but everything that was vile and refuse that they destroyed utterly.

Then came the word of the Lord unto Samuel, saying, "It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king, for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments."

And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the Lord all night. And when Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning, it was told Samuel, saying, "Saul came to Carmel, and, behold, he set him up a place, and is gone about, and passed on, and gone down to Gilgal." And Samuel came to Saul; and Saul said, "Blessed be thou of the Lord. I have performed the commandment of the Lord."

And Samuel said, "What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen, which I hear?"

"They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed," said Saul.

Then Samuel said unto Saul, "Stay, and I will tell thee what the Lord hath said to me this night."

"Say on."

And Samuel said, "When thou was little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed thee king over Israel? And the Lord sent thee on a journey, and said, 'Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed.' Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the Lord?"

"Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and have gone the way which the Lord hath sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites," said Saul. "But the people took of the spoil sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in Gilgal."

"Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord?" said Samuel. "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king."

"I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy words, because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice. Now, therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the Lord," said Saul.

"I will not return with thee," said Samuel, "for thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel." And as Samuel turned about to go away, Saul laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and it rent, and Samuel said unto him, "The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou. The Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent, for he is not a man that he should repent."

Then Saul said, "I have sinned. Yet honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with me, that I may worship the Lord thy God." So Samuel turned again after Saul; and Saul worshipped the Lord.

Then said Samuel, "Bring ye hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites." And Agag came unto him delicately; and Agag said, "Surely the bitterness of death is past."

"As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women," said Samuel, and he hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal. Then Samuel went to Ramah; and Saul went up to his house to Gibeah of Saul, and Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death.

I SAMUEL xv. to end

DAVID

1. "RUDDY AND GOODLY TO LOOK TO"

SAMUEL mourned for Saul, and the Lord repented that he had made Saul king over Israel and said unto Samuel, "How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill thine horn with oil, and go. I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided me a king among his sons."

"How can I go? If Saul hear it, he will kill me."

And the Lord said, "Take an heifer with thee, and say, 'I am come to sacrifice to the Lord.' Call Jesse to the sacrifice and I will show thee what thou shalt do; and thou shalt anoint unto me him whom I name unto thee."

Samuel did that which the Lord spake, and came to Bethlehem, and the elders of the town trembled at his coming and said, "Comest thou peaceably?"

"Peaceably. I am come to sacrifice unto the Lord. Sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice."

Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehem-judah, whose name was Jesse; and Jesse had eight sons, and the man went among men for an old man in the days of Saul. And the names of his eldest sons were Eliab, the first-born, and next unto him Abiram, and the third Shammah. And Samuel sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice. And it came to pass, when they were come that he looked on Eliab, and said, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before him."

But the Lord said, "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord seeth not as man seeth, for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."

Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, "Neither hath the Lord chosen this." Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by, and he said, "Neither hath the Lord chosen this." Again Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, "The Lord hath not chosen these. Are here all thy children?"

"There remaineth yet the youngest," said Jesse, "and behold, he keepeth the sheep."

"Send and fetch him, for we will not sit down till he come hither."

And Jesse sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the Lord said, "Arise, anoint him, for this is he." Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren, and the spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

But the spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him, and Saul's servants said unto him, "Behold now an evil spirit from God troubleth thee. Let our lord now command thy servants which are before thee, to seek out a man who is a cunning player on an harp, and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well."

"Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring him to me," said Saul unto his servants.

Then answered one of the servants, "Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, that is cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man and a man of war, and prudent in matters and a comely person, and the Lord is with him."

Wherefore Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, "Send me David thy son, which is with the sheep."

Jesse took an ass laden with bread, and a bottle of wine,

and a kid, and sent them by David his son unto Saul. And David came to Saul, and stood before him: and Saul loved him greatly, and he became his armour-bearer; and Saul sent to Jesse, saying, "Let David, I pray thee, stand before me, for he hath found favour in my sight." And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul that David took an harp, and played with his hand, so Saul was refreshed and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

I SAMUEL xvi. to end. I SAMUEL xvii. 12, 13

2. THE NAUGHTINESS OF HIS HEART

Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle, and were gathered together at Shoochoh, and Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together and pitched by the valley of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines. The Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side, and there was a valley between them.

There went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. He had an helmet of brass upon his head and he was armed with a coat of mail; and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of brass. He had greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders. The staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron; and one bearing a shield went before him.

And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, "Why are ye come out to set your battle in array? Am not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? Choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me. If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants; but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and

serve us. I defy the armies of Israel this day. Give me a man, that we may fight together."

When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid. And the Philistine drew near morning and evening, and presented himself for forty days.

Now the three eldest sons of Jesse went and followed Saul to the battle, but David went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem. And Jesse said unto David his son, "Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched corn and these ten loaves and run to the camp to thy brethren, and carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of their thousand, and look how thy brethren fare, and take their pledge."

David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and took and went, as Jesse had commanded him. He came to the place of the wagons, as the host which was going forth to the fight shouted for the battle. David left his baggage in the hand of the keeper of the baggage, and ran into the army, and came and saluted his brethren. And as he talked with them, behold, there came up the champion (the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name) out of the armies of the Philistines, and spake according to the same words, and David heard them. And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid, and said, "Have ye seen this man that is come up? Surely to defy Israel is he come up; and it shall be, that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel."

And David spake to the men that stood by him, "What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcized Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?"

The people answered him after this manner, "So shall it be done to the man that killeth him." And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men, and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, "Why comest thou down hither? And with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart, for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle."

"What have I now done? Is there not a cause?" said David, and he turned from him toward another, and spake after the same manner, and the people answered him again after the former manner. When the words were heard which David spake, they rehearsed them before Saul; and he sent for him.

And David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him. Thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine."

"Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him, for thou art but a youth and he a man of war from his youth," said Saul.

"Thy servant kept his father's sheep and there came a lion and a bear and took a lamb out of the flock. And I went out after him and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth, and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcized Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine."

"Go, and the Lord be with thee." And Saul armed David with his armour, and he put an helmet of brass on his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail. David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go, for he had not proved it, and he said unto Saul, "I cannot go

with these; for I have not proved them." And David put them off him.

He took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand, and he drew near to the Philistine. And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield went before him. And when the Philistine looked about and saw David, he despised him; for he was but a youth, and ruddy and of a fair countenance. And the Philistine said unto David, "Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods, and said, "Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field."

Then said David to the Philistine, "Thou comest to me with a sword and with a spear and with a shield, but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcases of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear, for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands."

And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth.

So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David. Therefore David ran

and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled.

And the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines, until thou come to the valley and to the gates of Ekron, and the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way of Shaaraim, even unto Gath, and unto Ekron; and the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines, and they spoiled their tents. And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem; but he put his armour in his tent. And Saul took him that day and would let him go no more home to his father's house.

I SAMUEL. xvii. 1 to 54, xviii. 2

3. DAVID AND JONATHAN

It came to pass that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David and Jonathan loved him as his own son. Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul, and Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him and gave it to David, and his garments even to his sword, and to his bow and to his girdle.

David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, and behaved himself wisely, and Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants. And it came to pass as they came when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistines that the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of music. And the women answered one another as they played, and said, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands."

And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him:

"They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands. What can he have more but the kingdom?" he said, and Saul eyed David from that day forward.

And it came to pass on the morrow, that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house: and David played with his hand, as at other times, and there was a javelin in Saul's hand. And Saul cast the javelin; for he said, "I will smite David even to the wall with it." And David avoided out of his presence twice, and Saul was afraid of David, because the Lord was with him, and was departed from Saul. Therefore Saul removed him from him, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people. David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and the Lord was with him. Wherefore, when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely he was afraid of him. But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them. And Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David, and they told Saul, and the thing pleased him, and Saul gave him Michal his daughter to wife; but Saul was yet the more afraid of David, and became David's enemy continually.

And Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill David, but Jonathan delighted much in David; and he told David, "Saul my father seeketh to kill thee. Now, therefore, I pray thee, take heed to thyself until the morning, and abide in a secret place, and hide thyself. And I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where thou art, and I will commune with my father of thee, and what I see, that I will tell thee."

Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, "Let not the king sin against his servant, against David, because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works have been to thee-ward very good. For

he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, and the Lord wrought a great salvation for all Israel. Thou sawest it, and didst rejoice. Wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause?"

Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan, and sware, "As the Lord liveth, he shall not be slain." And Jonathan called David, and showed him all those things, and he brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence, as in times past.

And there was war again and David went out and fought with the Philistines, and slew them with a great slaughter, and they fled from him, and the evil spirit from the Lord was upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his javelin in his hand; and David played with his hand. And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with the javelin; but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, and Saul smote the javelin into the wall. And David fled, and escaped that night.

Saul also sent messengers unto David's house to watch him, and to slay him in the morning, and Michal, David's wife, told him, "If thou save not thy life to-night, to-morrow thou shalt be slain." So Michal let David down through a window, and he went, and fled, and escaped; and Michal took an image, and laid it in the bed, and put a pillow of goats' hair for his bolster, and covered it with a cloth. And when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, "He is sick."

And Saul sent the messengers again to see David, saying, "Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may slay him." And when the messengers were come in, behold, there was an image in the bed, with a pillow of goats' hair for his bolster.

"Why hast thou deceived me so, and sent away mine enemy, that he is escaped?" said Saul unto Michal.

"He said unto me, 'Let me go; why should I kill thee?'" Michal answered.

So David fled, and escaped, and came to Samuel to Ramah,

and told him all that Saul had done to him; and he and Samuel went out and dwelt in Naioth.

And it was told Saul, saying, "Behold, David is at Naioth in Ramah." And Saul sent messengers to take David, and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as appointed over them, the spirit of God was upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied. And when it was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and they prophesied likewise. And Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they prophesied also.

Then he went also to Ramah, and came to a great well that is in Sechu, and he asked and said, "Where are Samuel and David?" And one said, "Behold, they be at Naioth in Ramah." And he went thither to Naioth in Ramah, and the spirit of God was upon him also, and he went on, and prophesied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah. And he stripped off his clothes also, and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night.

And David fled from Naioth in Ramah and came and said before Jonathan, "What have I done? What is mine iniquity? And what is my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life?"

"God forbid; thou shalt not die," Jonathan said. "Behold, my father will do nothing, either great or small, but that he will shew it me; and why should my father hide this thing from me? It is not so."

David sware moreover, and said, "Thy father certainly knoweth that I have found grace in thine eyes, and he saith, 'Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved'; but truly, as the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death."

Then said Jonathan unto David, "Whatsoever thy soul desireth I will even do it for thee."

"Behold, to-morrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat," said David, "but let me go, that I may hide myself in the field unto the third day at even. If thy father at all miss me, then say, 'David earnestly asked leave of me that he might run to Bethlehem, his city; for there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the family.' If he say thus, 'It is well,' thy servant shall have peace; but if he be very wroth, then be sure that evil is determined by him. Therefore thou shalt deal kindly with thy servant; for thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the Lord with thee. Notwithstanding, if there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself; for why shouldest thou bring me to thy father?"

"Far be it from thee; for if I knew certainly that evil were determined by my father to come upon thee, then would not I tell it thee?" said Jonathan.

"Who shall tell me? Or what if thy father answer thee roughly?"

"Come, and let us go out into the field," said Jonathan. And they went out both of them into the field. And Jonathan said, "O Lord God of Israel, when I have sounded my father about to-morrow any time, or the third day, and, behold, if there be good toward David, and I then send not unto thee, and show it thee, the Lord do so and much more to Jonathan, but if it please my father to do thee evil, then I will show it thee, and send thee away, that thou mayest go in peace; and the Lord be with thee, as he hath been with my father. And thou shalt not only while yet I live show me the kindness of the Lord, that I die not, but also thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever. No, not when the Lord hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth." And Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him, for he loved him as he loved his own soul.

Then Jonathan said to David, "To-morrow is the new

moon, and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty. And when thou hast stayed three days, then thou shalt go down quickly, and come to the place where thou didst hide thyself when the business was in hand, and shalt remain by the stone Ezel. I will shoot three arrows on the side thereof, as though I shot at a mark. And, behold, I will send a lad, saying, 'Go, find out the arrows.' If I expressly say unto the lad, 'Behold, the arrows are on this side of thee, take them'; then come thou, for there is peace to thee, and no hurt, as the Lord liveth. But if I say thus unto the young man, 'Behold, the arrows are beyond thee'; go thy way, for the Lord hath sent thee away. And as touching the matter which thou and I have spoken of, behold, the Lord be between thee and me for ever."

So David hid himself in the field; and when the new moon was come, the king sat him down to eat meat. The king sat upon his seat, as at other times, even upon a seat by the wall: and Jonathan arose, and Abner sat by Saul's side, and David's place was empty. Nevertheless, Saul spoke not anything that day, for he thought, "Something hath befallen him."

And on the morrow, which was the second day of the month, David's place was empty; and Saul said unto Jonathan his son, "Whercfore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, neither yesterday nor to-day?"

"David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Bethlehem," Jonathan answered. "He said, 'Let me go, I pray thee; for our family hath a sacrifice in the city; and my brother he hath commanded me to be there: and now, if I have found favour in thine eyes, let me get away, I pray thee, and see my brethren.' Therefore he cometh not unto the king's table."

Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said, "Thou son of the perverse rebellious woman, do not I

know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion, and unto the confusion of thy mother's nakedness. For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die."

"Wherefore shall he be slain? What hath he done?" Jonathan answered his father.

And Saul cast a javelin at him to smite him, whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to slay David. So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat no meat the second day of the month; for he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame.

In the morning Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little lad with him. And he said unto his lad, "Run, find out now the arrows which I shoot."

As the lad ran he shot an arrow beyond him, and when the lad came to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried after the lad, "Is not the arrow beyond thee? Make speed, haste, stay not." And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master. But the lad knew not any thing: only Jonathan and David knew the matter. And Jonathan gave his artillery unto his lad, and said, "Go, carry them unto the city."

As soon as the lad had gone, David arose out of a place toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times, and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded.

"Go in peace," Jonathan said to David. "Forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, 'The Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever.'" And David arose and departed; and Jonathan went into the city.

4. THE CAVE OF ADULLAM

Then came David to Nob to Ahimelech the priest, and Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David, and said unto him, "Why art thou alone, and no man with thee?"

"The king hath commanded me a business," said David, "and hath said unto me, 'Let no man know anything of the business wherabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee; and I have appointed my servants to such and such a place.' Now therefore what is under thine hand? Give me five loaves of bread in mine hand, or what there is present."

"There is no common bread under mine hand," answered the priest, "but there is hallowed bread, if the young men have kept themselves at least from women."

"Of a truth women have been kept from us about these three days, since I came out," answered David. So the priest gave him hallowed bread.

Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the Lord; and his name was Doeg, an Edomite, the chiefest of the herdmen that belonged to Saul. And David said unto Ahimelech, "Is there not here under thine hand spear or sword? For I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste."

And the priest said, "The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the valley of Elah, behold, it is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. If thou wilt take that, take it; for there is no other save that here."

"There is none like that. Give it me," said David, and he arose and fled that day for fear of Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath. And the servants of Achish said unto him, "Is not this David the king of the land? Did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying, 'Saul hath slain his

thousands, and David his ten thousand?" "And David laid up these words in his heart, and was sore afraid of Achish the king of Gath, and he changed his behaviour before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scrabbled on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard.

Then said Achish unto his servants, "Lo, ye see the man is mad. Wherefore then have ye brought him to me? Have I need of mad men, that ye have brought this fellow to play the mad man in my presence? Shall this fellow come into my house?"

David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam. And when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him. And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them; and there were with him about four hundred men.

1 SAMUEL. xxi, xxii. 1--2

5. DOEG THE EDOMITE

When Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men that were with him (now Saul abode in Gibeah under a tree in Ramah, having his spear in his hand, and all his servants were standing about him), Saul said unto his servants that stood about him, "Hear now, ye Benjamites! Will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, and make you all captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds, that all of you have conspired against me, and there is none that sheweth me that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse, and there is none of you that is sorry for me, or sheweth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait as at this day?"

Then answered Doeg the Edomite, which was set over the

servants of Saul, and said, "I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub. And he enquired of the Lord for him, and gave him victuals, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine."

Then the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, and all his father's house, the priests that were in Nob. And they came all of them to the king. And Saul said, "Hear now, thou son of Ahitub!"

"Here I am, my lord."

"Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast given him bread, and a sword, and hast enquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?"

Then Ahimelech answered, "Who is so faithful among all thy servants as David, which is the king's son-in-law, and goeth at thy bidding, and is honourable in thine house? Did I then begin to enquire of God for him? Be it far from me. Let not the king impute anything unto his servant, nor to all the house of my father; for thy servant knew nothing of all this, less or more."

"Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou and all thy father's house," said the king, and to the footmen that stood about him, he said, "Turn, and slay the priests of the Lord; because their hand also is with David, and because they knew when he fled, and did not show it to me."

But the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of the Lord. And the king said to Doeg, "Turn thou, and fall upon the priests," and Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the priests, and slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod. And Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and sucklings, and oxen, and asses, and sheep, with the edge of the sword.

One of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped, and fled after David, and showed David that Saul had slain the Lord's priests.

"I knew it," David said, "that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul. I have occasioned the death of all the persons of thy father's house. Abide thou with me, fear not; for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life: but with me thou shalt be in safeguard."

I SAMUEL. xxii. 6 to end

6. ABIGAIL.

There was a man in Maon whose possessions were in Carmel; and the man was very great, and he had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats; and he was shearing his sheep in Carmel. Now the name of the man was Nabal, and the name of his wife Abigail. She was a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance; but the man was churlish and evil in his doings.

David heard in the wilderness that Nabal did shear his sheep; and he sent out ten young men; and said unto them, "Get you up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name. Thus shall ye say to him that liveth in prosperity, 'Peace be both to thee, and peace be to thine house, and peace be unto all that thou hast. Now I have heard that thou hast shearers: now thy shepherds which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there ought missing unto them, all the while they were in Carmel. Ask thy young men, and they will show thee. Wherefore let the young men find favour in thine eyes; for we come in a good day. Give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand unto thy servants, and to thy son David.' "

When David's young men came, they spake to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David, and ceased.

And Nabal answered David's servants, "Who is David? And who is the son of Jesse? There be many servants now-a-days that break away every man from his master. Shall I take then my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men whom I know not whence they be?"

So David's young men turned their way, and went again, and came and told him all those sayings. And David said unto his men, "Gird ye on every man his sword." And they girded on every man his sword; and David also girded on his sword. There went up after David about four hundred men; and two hundred abode by the stuff.

But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, "Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master; and he railed on them. But the men were very good unto us, and we were not hurt, neither missed we any thing, as long as we were conversant with them when we were in the fields. They were a wall unto us, both by night and day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep. Now therefore know and consider what thou wilt do; for evil is determined against our master, and against all his household; for he is such a son of Belial, that a man cannot speak to him."

Then Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on asses, and said unto her servants, "Go on before me. Behold, I come after you"; but she told not her husband Nabal.

And it was so, as she rode on the ass, that she came down by the covert of the hill, and, behold, David and his men came down against her; and she met them.

Now David had said, "Surely in vain have I kept all that this fellow hath in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed

of all that pertained unto him: and he hath repented me evil for good. So and more also do God unto the enemies of David, if I leave of all that pertain to him, by the morning light, so much as one man-child."

When Abigail saw David, she hasted, and lighted off the ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and fell at his feet, and said,

"Upon me, my lord, upon me let this iniquity be; and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience, and hear the words of thine handmaid. Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal. As his name is, so is he; Nabal¹ is his name, and folly with him. I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send. Now, therefore, my lord, as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, seeing the Lord hath withholden thee from coming to shed blood, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand, now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal. And now this blessing, which thine handmaid hath brought unto my lord, let it even be given unto the young men that follow my lord. I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thine handmaid: for the Lord will certainly make my lord a sure house; because my lord figheth the battles of the Lord, and evil hath not been found in thee all thy days. Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul; but the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God. The souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, as out of the middle of a sling. And when the Lord shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel, this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord, either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself.

¹ Fool.

But when the Lord shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thine handmaid."

And David said unto Abigail, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me. And blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand. For in very deed, as the Lord God of Israel liveth, which hath kept me back from hurting thee, except thou hadst hasted and come to meet me, surely there had not been left unto Nabal by the morning light so much as one man-child."

So David received of her hand that which she had brought him, and said unto her, "Go up in peace to thine house. See, I have hearkened to thy voice, and have accepted thy person."

And Abigail came to Nabal; and, behold, he held a feast in his house, like the feast of a king. And Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunken, wherefore she told him nothing, less or more, until the morning light. But in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal and his wife had told him these things, his heart died within him, and he became as a stone. And about ten days after the Lord smote Nabal, he died.

When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, "Blessed be the Lord, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and hath kept his servant from evil; for the Lord hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head." And David sent and communed with Abigail, to take her to him to wife, and when the servants of David were come to Abigail to Carmel, they spake unto her, saying,

"David sent us unto thee, to take thee to him to wife."

She arose, and bowed herself on her face to the earth, and said, "Behold, let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord." And Abigail hasted, and arose, and rode upon an ass, with five damsels of hers that went

after her; and she went after the messengers of David, and became his wife

1 SAMUEL XXV. 3 42

7. DAVID SPARES SAUL

The Ziphites came unto Saul to Gibeah, saying, "Doth not David hide himself in the hill of Hachilah, which is before Jeshimon?" Then Saul arose, and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, having three thousand chosen men of Israel with him, to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph, and pitched in the hill of Hachilah. But David abode in the wilderness; and he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness. He therefore sent out spies, and understood that Saul was come in very deed. And David arose, and came to the place where Saul had pitched: and David beheld the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the captain of his host, and Saul lay in the midst of his carriages, and the people pitched round about him.

Then David said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother to Joab, "Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp?"

"I will go down with thee," said Abishai.

So David and Abishai came to the people by night: and, behold, Saul lay sleeping, and his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster; but Abner and the people lay round about him. Then said Abishai to David, "God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day. Now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not smite him the second time."

"Destroy him not. For who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless?" said David. "As the Lord liveth, the Lord shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish. The

Lord forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed; but, I pray thee, take thou now the spear that is at his bolster, and the cruse of water, and let us go."

So David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's bolster; and they gat them away, and no man saw it, nor knew it, neither awaked, for they were all asleep because a deep sleep from the Lord was fallen upon them. Then David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of an hill afar off, a great space being between them. And he cried to the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, "Answerest thou not, Abner?"

"Who art thou that criest to the king?" answered Abner.

And David said to Abner, "Art not thou a valiant man? And who is like to thee in Israel? Wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king? For there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord. This thing is not good that thou hast done. As the Lord liveth ye are worthy to die, because ye have not kept your master, the Lord's anointed. And now see where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his bolster."

Saul knew David's voice and said, "Is this thy voice, my son David?"

"It is my voice, my lord, O king," said David. "Wherefore doth my lord thus pursue after his servant? For what have I done? Or what evil is in mine hand? Now therefore I pray thec let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If the Lord have stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering: but if they be the children of men, cursed be they before the Lord; for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, saying, 'Go, serve other gods.' Now, therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth before the face of the Lord; for the king of Israel is come out to seek a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains."

Then said Saul, "I have sinned. Return, my son David, for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day. Behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly."

And David answered, "Behold the king's spear! Let one of the young men come over and fetch it. The Lord render to every man his righteousness and his faithfulness, for the Lord delivered thee into my hand to-day, but I would not stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed. And, behold, as thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes, so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the Lord, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation."

Then Saul said to David, "Blessed be thou, my son David. Thou shalt both do great things and also shalt still prevail." So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place.

I SAMUEL xxvi. 1 to end

8. ZIKLAC

David said in his heart, "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul. There is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel. So shall I escape out of his hand." And David arose, and passed over with the six hundred men that were with him unto Achish, king of Gath. And he dwelt with Achish at Gath, he and his men, every man with his household. And it was told Saul that David was fled to Gath: and he sought no more again for him.

"If I have now found grace in thine eyes," David said to Achish, "let them give me a place in some town in the country, that I may dwell there; for why should thy servant dwell in the royal city with thee?" Then Achish gave him Ziklag that day.

Now the Philistines gathered together all their armies to Aphek; and the Israelites pitched by a fountain which is in Jezreel. The lords of the Philistines passed on by hundreds and by thousands; but David and his men passed on in the rearward with Achish. Then said the princes of the Philistines, "What do these Hebrews here?"

And Achish said unto the princes of the Philistines, "Is not this David, the servant of Saul the king of Israel, which hath been with me these days, or these years, and I have found no fault in him since he fell unto me unto this day?"

And the princes of the Philistines were wroth with Achish, and said unto him, "Make this fellow return, that he may go again to his place which thou hast appointed him, and let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he be an adversary to us. For wherewith should he reconcile himself unto his master? Should it not be with the heads of these men? Is not this David, of whom they sang one to another in dances, saying, 'Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten thousands'?"

Then Achish called David, and said, "Surely as the Lord liveth, thou hast been upright, and thy going out and thy coming in with me in the host is good in my sight; for I have not found evil in thee since the day of thy coming unto me this day. Nevertheless, the lords favour thee not. Wherefore now return and go in peace, that thou displease not the lords of the Philistines."

"But what have I done?" David said. "And what hast thou found in thy servant, so long as I have been with thee unto this day, that I may not go fight against the enemies of my lord the king?"

"I know that thou art good in my sight, as an angel of God," Achish answered. "Notwithstanding, the princes of the Philistines have said, 'He shall not go up with us to the battle.' Wherefore now rise up early in the morning with thy

master's servants that are come with thee; and as soon as ye be up early in the morning and have light, depart."

So David and his men rose up early to depart in the morning to return into the land of the Philistines; and the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

It came to pass when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day that the Amalekites had invaded the south and Ziklag and smitten Ziklag, and burnt it with fire; and had taken the women captives that were therein. They slew not any, either great or small, but carried them away, and went on their way. So David and his men came to the city, and, behold, it was burnt with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives. Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep. David's two wives were taken captives, and David was greatly distressed. The people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters; but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God, and he said to Abiathar the priest, "I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod."

And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David, and David enquired at the Lord, saying, "Shall I pursue after this troop? Shall I overtake them?"

And the Lord answered him, "Pursue; for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all." So David went, he and the six hundred men; for two hundred abode behind, which were so faint that they could not go over the brook Besor. And they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David, and gave him bread, and he did eat; and they made him drink water. They gave him a piece of a cake of figs, and two clusters of raisins, and, when he had eaten, his spirit came again to him; for he had eaten no bread, nor drunk any water, three days and three nights.

"To whom belongeth thou? And whence art thou?" said David unto him.

"I am a young man of Egypt," he said, "servant to an Amalekite; and my master left me, because three days agone I fell sick. We made an invasion upon the south of the Chere-thites, and upon the coast which belongeth to Judah, and upon the south of Caleb; and we burnt Ziklag with fire."

"Canst thou bring me down to this company?" said David.

And he said, "Swear unto me by God, that thou wilt neither kill me, nor deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will bring thee down to this company." And when he had brought him down, behold, they were spread abroad upon all the earth, eating and drinking and dancing, because of all the great spoil that they had taken, out of the land of the Philistines, and out of the land of Judah. And David smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day: and there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men, which rode upon camels and fled. David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away; and David rescued his two wives. And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither spoil, nor any thing that they had taken to them. David recovered all. And David took all the flocks and the herds which they drove before those other cattle, and said, "This is David's spoil."

And David came to the two hundred men, which were so faint that they could not follow David, whom they had made also to abide at the brook Besor; and they went forth to meet David, and to meet the people that were with him. And when David came near to the people he saluted them. Then answered all the wicked men and men of Belial, of those that went with David, "Because they went not with us, we will not give them aught of the spoil that we have

recovered, save to every man his wife and his children, that they may lead them away, and depart."

Then said David, "Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with that which the Lord hath given us, who hath preserved us, and delivered the company that came against us into our hands. For who will hearken unto you in this matter? But as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff. They shall part alike." And it was so from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day.

And when David came to Ziklag he sent of the spoil unto the elders of Judah, even to his friends, saying, "Behold a present for you of the spoil of the enemies of the Lord."

I SAMUEL. xxvii. 1-6, xxix, xxx. 1-26

9. THE WITCH OF ENDOR

Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits and the wizards out of the land.

The Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem; and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa. When Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled. And when Saul enquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. Then said Saul unto his servants, "Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her."

"Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at En-Dor," said his servants.

Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night, and Saul said, "I pray thee, divine unto me by the

familiar spirit, and bring me him up whom I shall name unto thee."

"Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done," said the woman, "how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits and the wizards out of the land. Wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die?"

And Saul sware to her by the Lord, saying, "As the Lord liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing."

"Whom shall I bring up unto thee?" said the woman.

"Bring me up Samuel."

When the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice; and spake to Saul, "Why hast thou deceived me? Thou art Saul."

"Be not afraid," said the king. "What sawest thou?"

"I saw gods ascending out of the earth."

"What form is he of?"

"An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle."

And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself. And Samuel said to Saul, "Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up?"

"I am sore distressed," Saul answered, "the Philistines made war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets nor by dreams. Therefore have I called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do."

Then said Samuel, "Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the Lord is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy? And the Lord hath done to him as he spake by me; for the Lord hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, even to David. Because thou obeyest not the voice of the Lord, nor executest his fierce wrath upon Amalck, therefore hath the Lord done this thing unto thee

this day. Moreover, the Lord will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines; and to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me. The Lord also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines."

Then Saul fell straightway all along on the earth, and was sore afraid because of the words of Samuel; and there was no strength in him, for he had eaten no bread all the day nor all the night. And the woman came unto Saul, and saw that he was sore troubled, and said unto him, "Behold, thine handmaid hath obeyed thy voice, and I have put my life in my hand and have hearkened unto thy words which thou spakest unto me. Now, therefore, I pray thee, hearken thou also unto the voice of thine handmaid, and let me set a morsel of bread before thee; and eat, that thou mayest have strength when thou goest on thy way."

But he refused and said, "I will not eat." But his servants together with the woman compelled him; and he hearkened unto their voice. So he arose from the earth, and sat upon the bed. The woman had a fat calf in the house; and she hastened and killed it, and took flour, and kneaded it, and did bake unleavened bread thereof. And she brought it before Saul, and before his servants; and they did eat. Then they rose up, and went away that night.

I SAMUEL. xxviii. 3 to end

10. THE DEATH OF SAUL.

The Philistines fought against Israel, and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa. The Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons; and they slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Melchi-shua, Saul's sons. And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was sore wounded of the archers. Then said Saul unto his armour-bearer, "Draw thy

sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcized come and thrust me through, and abuse me."

But his armour-bearer would not, for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it. And when his armour-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him.

So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armour-bearer, and all his men, that same day together. And when the men of Israel that were on the other side of the valley, and they that were on the other side of Jordan, saw that the men of Israel fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities, and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them. And on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, they found Saul and his three sons fallen in mount Gilboa. They cut off his head, and stripped off his armour, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to publish it in the house of their idols, and among the people; and they put his armour in the house of Ashtaroth, and fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan.

When the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead heard of that which the Philistines had done to Saul, all the valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-shan, and came to Jabesh, and burnt them there. And they took their bones, and buried them under a tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days.

Now, after the death of Saul, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites, and David had abode two days in Ziklag, on the third day a man came out of the camp from Saul, with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head; and when he came to David, he fell to the earth, and did obeisance.

"From whence comest thou?" David said unto him.

"Out of the camp of Israel am I escaped."

"How went the matter? I pray thee, tell me," said David.

And the man answered that the people are fled from the battle and many of the people also are fallen and dead; and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also.

"How knowest thou that Saul and Jonathan his son be dead?" David said unto the young man that told him.

And the young man said, "As I happened by chance upon mount Gilboa, behold, Saul leaned upon his spear; and, lo, the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him. And when he looked behind him, he saw me, and called unto me, and I answered, 'Here am I.' And he said unto me, 'Who art thou?' And I answered him, 'I am an Amalekite.' He said unto me again, 'Stand, I pray thee, upon me, and slay me; for anguish is come upon me, because my life is yet whole in me.' So I stood upon him, and slew him, because I was sure that he could not live after that he was fallen. I took the crown that was upon his head, and the bracelet that was on his arm, and have brought them hither unto my lord."

Then David took hold on his clothes, and rent them; and likewise all the men that were with him. And they mourned, and wept, and fasted until even for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the Lord, and for the house of Israel; because they were fallen by the sword.

And David said unto the young man, "Whence art thou?"

"I am the son of a stranger, an Amalekite," he answered.

"How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?" said David; and he called one of the young men, and said, "Go near, and fall upon him." And he smote him that he died. And David said unto him, "Thy blood be upon thy head; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the Lord's anointed."

And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son:

The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places:
 How are the mighty fallen!
 Tell it not in Gath,
 Publish it not in the streets of Askelon;
 Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,
 Lest the daughters of the uncircumcized triumph.
 Ye mountains of Gilboa,
 Let there be no dew, neither rain upon you, nor fields of
 offerings:
 For there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away,
 The shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed
 with oil.
 From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty,
 The bow of Jonathan turned not back,
 And the sword of Saul returned not empty.

Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives,
 And in their death they were not divided:
 They were swifter than eagles,
 They were stronger than lions,
 Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,
 Who clothed you in scarlet, with other delights,
 Who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel.
 How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!
 O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places!
 I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan:
 Very pleasant hast thou been unto me:
 Thy love to me was wonderful,
 Passing the love of women.

How are the mighty fallen,
 And the weapons of war perished!

II. ABNER AND JOAB

The men of Judah came, and anointed David king over the house of Judah; but Abner the son of Ner, captain of Saul's host, took Ishi-bosheth the son of Saul, and brought him over to Mahanaim; and made him king over Gilead, and over the Ashurites, and over Jezreel, and over Ephraim, and over Benjamin, and over all Israel. But the house of Judah followed David.

Abner the son of Ner and the servants of Ishi-bosheth the son of Saul went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon. And Joab the son of Zeruiah, and the servants of David went out, and met together by the pool of Gibeon; and they sat down, the one on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool.

And Abner said to Joab, "Let the young men now arise and play before us."

"Let them arise," said Joab.

Then there arose and went over by number twelve of Benjamin, which pertained to Ishi-bosheth the son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of David; and they caught every one his fellow by the head, and thrust his sword in his fellow's side; so they fell down together. And there was a very sore battle that day; and Abner was beaten, and the men of Israel, before the servants of David. There were three sons of Zeruiah there, Joab, and Abishai, and Asahel; and Asahel was as light of foot as a wild roe. And Asahel pursued after Abner; and in going he turned not to the right hand nor to the left from following Abner. Then Abner looked behind him, and said, "Art thou Asahel?"

"I am," he answered.

"Turn thee aside to thy right hand or to thy left," said Abner, "and lay thee hold on one of the young men, and

take thee his armour." But Asahel would not turn aside from following him.

And Abner said again to Asahel, "Turn thee aside from following me. Wherefore should I smite thee to the ground? How then should I hold up my face to Joab thy brother?" Howbeit he refused to turn aside; wherefore Abner with the hinder end of the spear smote him under the fifth rib, that the spear came out behind him; and he fell down there, and died in the same place: and it came to pass that as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died, stood still.

Joab also and Abishai pursued after Abner; and the sun went down when they were come to the hill of Ammah, that lieth before Giah by the way of the wilderness of Gibeon. And the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together after Abner, and became one troop, and stood on the top of an hill. Then Abner called to Joab, "Shall the sword devour for ever? Knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end? How long shall it be then ere thou bid the people return from following their brethren?"

And Joab said, "As God liveth, unless thou hadst spoken, surely then in the morning the people had gone up every one from following his brother." So Joab blew a trumpet, and all the people stood still, and pursued after Israel no more, neither fought they any more.

Now there was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David; but David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker, and Abner made himself strong for the house of Saul. And Saul had a concubine whose name was Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah: and Ish-bosheth said to Abner, "Wherefore hast thou gone in unto my father's concubine?"

Then was Abner very wroth for the words of Ish-bosheth, and said, "Am I a dog's head, which against Judah do show kindness this day unto the house of Saul thy father, to his

brethren, and to his friends, and have not delivered thee into the hand of David, that thou charge *it* me to day with a fault concerning this woman? So do God to Abner, and more also, except, as the Lord hath sworn to David, even so I do to him. To translate the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel, and over Judah, from Dan even to Beer-sheba."

And Abner sent messengers to David saying, "Whose is the land? Make thy league with me, and, behold, my hand shall be with thee." And David said, "Well, I will make a league with thee."

So Abner came to David to Hebron, and twenty men with him: and David made Abner, and the men that were with him, a feast.

"I will arise and go," said Abner, "and will gather all Israel unto my Lord the king, that they may make a league with thee, and that thou mayest reign over all that thine heart desireth." And David sent Abner away; and he went in peace.

And behold the servants of David and Joab came from pursuing a troop, and brought in a great spoil with them; but Abner was not with David in Hebron; for he had sent him away, and he was gone in peace. When Joab and all the host that was with him were come, they told Joab, saying, "Abner the son of Ner came to the king, and he hath sent him away, and he is gone in peace."

Then Joab came to the king, and said, "What hast thou done? Behold, Abner came unto thee; why is it that thou hast sent him away, and he is quite gone? Thou knowest Abner the son of Ner, that he came to deceive thee, and to know all that thou doest." And when Joab was come out from David, he sent messengers after Abner, which brought him again from the well of Sirah; but David knew it not. And when Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside in

the gate, to speak with him quietly, and smote him there under the fifth rib, that he died, for the blood of Asahel his brother.

Afterward when David heard it, he said, "I and my kingdom are guiltless before the Lord for ever from the blood of Abner the son of Ner. Let it rest on the head of Joab, and on all his father's house; and let there not fail from the house of Joab one that hath an issue, or that is a leper, or that leaneith on a staff, or that falleth on the sword, or that lacketh bread." So Joab and Abishai his brother slew Abner, because he had slain their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the battle.

And David said to Joab, and to all the people that were with him, "Rend your clothes, and gird you with sackcloth, and mourn before Abner." And king David himself followed the bier. And they buried Abner in Hebron: and the king lifted up his voice, and wept at the grave of Abner; and all the people wept. And the king lamented over Abner, and said, "Died Abner as a fool dieth? Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters: as a man falleth before wicked men, so fellest thou." And all the people wept again over him. And when all the people came to cause David to eat meat while it was yet day, David sware, saying, "So do God to me, and more also, if I taste bread, or ought else, till the sun be down."

All the people took notice of it, and it pleased them; as whatsoever the king did pleased all the people. For all the people, and all Israel, understood that day, that it was not of the king to slay Abner the son of Ner. And the king said unto his servants, "Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel? And I am this day weak, though anointed king; and these men the sons of Zeruiah be too hard for me: the Lord shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness."

12. THE ONE EWE LAMB

After the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem.

It came to pass in an evening-tide that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house, and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon. And David sent and enquired after the woman, and one said, "Is not this Bath-sheba, the daughter of the Eliam, wife of Uriah the Hittite?"

David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; and she returned unto her house. And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, "I am with child."

And David sent to Joab, saying, "Send me Uriah the Hittite," and Joab sent Uriah to David. And when Uriah was come unto him, David demanded of him how Joab did, and how the people did, and how the war prospered, and he said to Uriah, "Go down to thy house and wash thy feet."

Uriah departed out of the king's house, and there followed him a mess of meat from the king. But Uriah slept on the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and went not down to his house.

And when they had told David, "Uriah went not down unto his house," David said unto Uriah, "Camest thou not from thy journey? Why then didst thou not go down unto thine house?"

"The ark and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents," said Uriah, "and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in open fields. Shall I then go unto mine own

house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? As thou livest, and as thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing."

"Tarry here to-day also, and to-morrow I will let thee depart," David said. So Uriah abode in Jerusalem that day and the morrow. And when David had called him, he did eat and drink before him; and he made him drunk: and at even he went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord, but went not down to his house.

In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah. And he wrote in the letter, saying, "Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die." And when Joab observed the city, he assigned Uriah unto a place where he knew that valiant men were. The men of the city went out and fought with Joab: and there fell some of the people of the servants of David; and Uriah the Hittite died also.

Then Joab sent and told David all the things concerning the war; and charged the messenger saying, "When thou hast made an end of telling the matters of the war unto the king, and if so be that the king's wrath arise, and he say unto thee, 'Wherefore approached ye so nigh unto the city when ye did fight? Knew ye not that they would shoot from the wall? Who smote Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? Did not a woman cast a piece of a millstone upon him from the wall, that he died in Thebez? Why went ye nigh the wall?' Then say thou, 'Thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.' "

So the messenger went, and came and showed David all that Joab had sent him for, and said, "Surely the men prevailed against us, and came out unto us into the field, and we were upon them even unto the entering of the gate. And the shooters shot from off the wall upon thy servants; and some of the king's servants be dead, and thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also."

Then David said unto the messenger, "Thus shalt thou

say unto Joab, 'Let not this thing displease thee; for the sword devoureth one as well as another. Make thy battle more strong against the city, and overthrow it'; and encourage thou him."

When the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband; and when the mourning was past, David sent and fetched her to his house, and she became his wife and bare him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord; and the Lord sent Nathan unto David, and Nathan came and said unto him, "There were two men in one city; the one rich and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds, but the poor man had nothing save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up; and it grew up together with him, and with his children. It did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man; and he spared to take of his own flock, and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him, but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him."

David's anger was greatly kindled against the man, "As the Lord liveth," he said, "the man that hath done this thing shall surely die. He shall restore the lamb fourfold because he did this thing, and because he had no pity."

Then said Nathan unto David, "Thou art the man. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, 'I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul. I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken

his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house, because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.' Thus saith the Lord, 'Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For thou didst it secretly; but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.' "

"I have sinned against the Lord," said David.

And Nathan said unto David, "The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die."

Nathan departed unto his house, and the Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick. David therefore besought God for the child, and David fasted and went in, and lay all night upon the earth. The elders of his house arose, and went to him, to raise him up from the earth, but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them. On the seventh day the child died, and the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead; for they said, "Behold while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice. How will he then vex himself if we tell him that the child is dead?"

But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead; therefore he said unto his servants, "Is the child dead?"

And they said, "He is dead."

Then David arose from the earth, and washed and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped. Then he came to his own house;

and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat.

Then said his servants unto him, "What thing is this that thou hast done? Thou didst fast and weep for the child, while it was alive; but when the child was dead thou didst rise and eat bread."

And he said, "While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, 'Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me that the child may live?' But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

And David comforted Bath-sheba his wife, and went in unto her, and lay with her; and she bare a son, and he called his name Solomon; and the Lord loved him.

2 SAMUEL. xi. xii. 1-24

13. "O ABSALOM, MY SON! MY SON!"

Unto David were sons born in Hebron; his first-born was Amnon, of Ahinoam the Jezreelite; and his second Chileab, of Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite; and the third Absalom, the son of Maacah the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur; and the fourth Adonijah, the son of Haggith; and the fifth, Shephatiah, the son of Abital; and the sixth Ithream, by Eglah, David's wife.

Absalom spake unto his brother Amnon neither good nor bad; for Absalom hated Amnon, because he had forced his sister Tamar. And it came to pass after two full years that Absalom had sheep-shearers in Baal-hazor, which is beside Ephraim; and Absalom invited all the king's sons, and he came to the king, and said, "Behold, now, thy servant hath sheep-shearers; let the king, I beseech thee, and his servants, go with thy servant."

"Nay, my son," the king said, "let us not all now go, lest we be chargeable unto thee." And Absalom pressed him; howbeit he would not go, but blessed him.

Then said Absalom, "If not, I pray thee, let my brother Amnon go with us."

"Why should he go with thee?" said the king.

But Absalom pressed him, that he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him. Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, "Mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, 'Smite Amnon,' then kill him, fear not. Have not I commanded you? Be courageous, and be valiant." And the servants of Absalom did unto Amnon as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king's sons arose, and every man gat him up upon his mule, and fled. While they were in the way, tidings came to David, saying, "Absalom hath slain all the king's sons, and there is not one of them left." Then the king arose, and tare his garments, and lay on the earth; and all his servants stood by with their clothes rent.

And Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother, answered, "Let not my lord suppose that they have slain all the young men the king's sons; for Amnon only is dead. Now, therefore, let not my lord the king take the thing to his heart, to think that all the king's sons are dead."

But Absalom fled. And the young man that kept the watch lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, there came much people by the way of the hill side behind him. And Jonadab said unto the king, "Behold, the king's sons come; as thy servant said, so it is." And as soon as he had made an end of speaking, behold, the king's sons came, and lifted up their voices and wept; and the king also and all his servants wept very sore. But Absalom fled, and went to Talmai, king of Geshur, and was there three years. And David mourned for his son every day, and his soul longed to go forth unto

Absalom; for he was comforted concerning Amnon, seeing he was dead.

Now Joab the son of Zeruiah perceived that the king's heart was toward Absalom. And Joab sent to Tekoah, and fetched thence a wise woman, and said unto her, "I pray thee, feign thyself to be a mourner and put on now mourning apparel, and anoint not thyself with oil, but be as a woman that had a long time mourned for the dead; and come to the king, and speak on this manner unto him." So Joab put the words in her mouth. And when the woman of Tekoah spake to the king, she fell on her face to the ground, and did obeisance, and said, "Help, O king!"

"What aileth thee?" said the king.

"I am indeed a widow woman, and mine husband is dead," she answered. "And thy handmaid had two sons, and they strove together in the field, and there was none to part them, but the one smote the other, and slew him. And, behold, the whole family is risen against thine handmaid, and they said, 'Deliver him that smote his brother, that we may kill him, for the life of his brother whom he slew; and we will destroy the heir also.' So they shall quench my coal which is left, and shall not leave to my husband neither name nor remainder upon the earth."

"Go to thine house," the king said, "and I will give charge concerning thee."

"My lord, O king, the iniquity be on me, and on my father's house; and the king and his throne be guiltless."

"Whosoever saith ought unto thee," said the king, "bring him to me, and he shall not touch thee any more."

Then said she, "I pray thee, let the king remember the Lord thy God, that thou wouldest not suffer the revengers of blood to destroy any more, lest they destroy my son."

"As the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of thy

son fall to the earth."

"Let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak one word unto my lord the king," said the woman.

"Say on."

"Wherefore then hast thou thought such a thing against the people of God?" said the woman. "For the king doth speak this thing, as one which is faulty, in that the king doth not fetch home again his banished. For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect any person; yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him. Now therefore that I am come to speak of this thing unto my lord the king, it is because the people have made me afraid; and thy handmaid said, I will now speak unto the king; it may be that the king will perform the request of his handmaid. For the king will hear, to deliver his handmaid out of the hand of the man that would destroy me and my son together out of the inheritance of God." Then thine handmaid said, 'The word of my lord the king shall now be comfortable: for as an angel of God, so is my lord the king, to discern good and bad; therefore the Lord thy God will be with thee.' "

Then the king answered, "Hide not from me, I pray thee, the thing that I shall ask thee."

"Let my lord the king now speak."

"Is not the hand of Joab with thee in all this?"

"As thy soul liveth, my lord the king," the woman answered, "none can turn to the right hand or to the left from ought that my lord the king hath spoken, for thy servant Joab, he bade me, and he put all these words in the mouth of thine handmaid. To fetch about this form of speech hath thy servant Joab done this thing: and my lord is wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God, to know all things that are in the earth."

And the king said unto Joab, "Behold now, I have done this thing. Go, therefore, bring the young man Absalom

again." And Joab fell to the ground on his face, and bowed himself, and thanked the king; and said, "To-day thy servant knoweth that I have found grace in thy sight, my lord, O king, in that the king hath fulfilled the request of his servant." So Joab arose, and went to Geshur, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem.

And the king said, "Let him turn to his own house, and let him not see my face." So Absalom returned to his own house, and saw not the king's face. But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty; from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him. So Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, and saw not the king's face. Therefore Absalom sent for Joab, to have sent him to the king; but he would not come to him; and when he sent again the second time, he would not come. Therefore Absalom said unto his servants, "See, Joab's field is near mine, and he hath barley there; go and set it on fire." And Absalom's servants set the field on fire.

Then Joab arose, and came to Absalom unto his house, and said unto him. "Wherefore have thy servants set my field on fire?"

"Behold, I sent unto thee," Absalom answered, "saying, 'Come hither, that I may send thee to the king, to say, Wherefore am I come from Geshur?' It had been good for me to have been there still. Now therefore let me see the king's face; and if there be any iniquity in me, let him kill me."

So Joab came to the king, and told him: and when he had called for Absalom, he came to the king, and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king; and the king kissed Absalom.

And it came to pass after this that Absalom prepared him chariots and horses and fifty men to run before him, and he rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate; and when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judg-

speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword."

"Behold, thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint," said the king's servants.

The king went forth, and all the people after him, and tarried in a place that was far off. All his servants passed on beside him; and all the Cherethites, and all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, six hundred men which came after him from Gath, passed on before the king. Then said the king to Ittai the Gittite, "Wherefore goest thou also with us? Return to thy place, and abide with the king; for thou art a stranger, and also an exile. Whereas thou camest but yesterday, should I this day make thee go up and down with us? Seeing I go whither I may, return thou and take back thy brethren. Mercy and truth be with thee."

"As the Lord liveth," Ittai answered, "and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be."

"Go and pass over," David said to Ittai. And Ittai passed over, and all his men, and all the little ones that were with him. All the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people passed over: the king also himself passed over the brook Kidron, and all the people passed over, toward the way of the wilderness. And lo, Zadok, also, and all the Levites were with him, bearing the ark of the covenant of God; and they set down the ark of God; and Abiathar went up, until all the people had done passing out of the city.

The king said unto Zadok, "Carry back the ark of God into the city. If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and show me both it and his habitation. But if he thus say, 'I have no delight in thee,' behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him." And the king said also unto Zadok the priest, "Art not thou a seer? Return into the city in peace, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz

thy son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar. See, I will tarry in the plain of the wilderness, until there come word from you to certify me." Zadok therefore and Abiathar carried the ark of God again to Jerusalem; and they tarried there.

And David went up by the ascent of mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered. He went barefoot, and all the people that was with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up. And one told David, saying, "Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom." And David said, "O Lord, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness."

When David was come to the top of the mount, where he worshipped God, behold, Hushai the Archite came to meet him with his coat rent, and earth upon his head. Unto whom David said, "If thou passeth on with me, then thou shalt be a burden unto me. But if thou return to the city, and say unto Absalom, 'I will be thy servant, O king. As I have been thy father's servant hitherto, so will I now also be thy servant,' then mayest thou for me defeat the counsel of Ahithophel. Hast thou not there with thee Zadok and Abiathar the priests? Therefore it shall be, that what thing soever thou shalt hear out of the king's house, thou shalt tell it to Zadok and Abiathar the priests. Behold, they have there with them their two sons, Ahimaaz, Zadok's son, and Jonathan, Abiathar's son; and by them ye shall send unto me every thing that ye can hear." So Hushai, David's friend, came into the city, and Absalom came into Jerusalem.

When David was a little past the top of the hill, behold, Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him, with a couple of asses saddled, and upon them two hundred loaves of bread, and an hundred bunches of raisins, and an hundred of summer fruits, and a bottle of wine.

"What meanest thou by these?" the king said unto Ziba. "The asses be for the king's household to ride on," said

Ziba, "and the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat; and the wine, that such as be faint in the wilderness may drink."

"And where is thy master's son?" said the king.¹

"Behold, he abideth at Jerusalem; for he said, 'To-day shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father.' "

Then said the king to Ziba, "Behold, thine are all that pertain unto Mephibosheth."

"I humbly beseech thee that I may find grace in thy sight, my lord, O king," said Ziba.

And when king David came to Bahurim, behold, thence came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei. He came forth, and cursed still as he came, and he cast stones at David, and at all the servants of king David; and all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left. Thus said Shimei when he cursed, "Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial. The Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned. The Lord hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son; and behold, thou art taken in thy mischief, because thou art a bloody man."

Then said Abishai the son of Zeruiah unto the king, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head."

And the king said, "What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? So let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, 'Curse David.' Who shall then say, 'Wherefore hast thou done so?' Behold my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life. How much more now may this Benjamite do it? Let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him. It may be that the Lord will look on

¹ Mephibosheth was a son of Saul, whom David had spared out of friendship for Jonathan. For sequel see 2 Sam. xix. 24-30.—ED.

mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day." And as David and his men went by the way, Shimei went along on the hill's side over against him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and cast dust. And the king and all the people that were with him came weary, and refreshed themselves there.

Absalom, and all the people the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel with him; and when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, was come unto Absalom, Hushai said unto Absalom, "God save the king! God save the king!"

"Is this thy kindness to thy friend?" said Absalom. "Why wentest thou not with thy friend?"

"Nay," said Hushai, "but whom the Lord, and this people, and all the men of Israel, choose, his will I be, and with him will I abide. And again, whom should I serve? Should I not serve in the presence of his son? As I have served in thy father's presence, so will I be in thy presence."

Then said Absalom to Ahithophel, "Give counsel among you what we shall do."

And the counsel of Ahithophel, which he counselled in those days, was as if a man had enquired at the oracle of God; so was all the counsel of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom. And Ahithophel said unto Absalom, "Let me now choose out twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue after David this night. I will come upon him while he is weary and weak handed, and will make him afraid; and all the people that are with him shall flee; and I will smite the king only. I will bring back all the people unto thee; the man whom thou seekest is as if all returned; so all the people shall be in peace." And the saying pleased Absalom well, and all the elders of Israel.

"Call now Hushai the Archite also," said Absalom, "and let us hear likewise what he saith." And when Hushai was come, Absalom spake unto him, "Ahithophel hath spoken

after this manner. Shall we do after his saying? If not, speak thou."

"The counsel that Ahithophel hath given is not good at this time," said Hushai. "For thou knowest thy father and his men, that they be mighty men, and they be chafed in their minds, as a bear robbed of her whelps in the field; and thy father is a man of war and will not lodge with the people. Behold, he is hid now in some pit, or in some other place. And it will come to pass, when some of them be overthrown at first, that whosoever heareth it will say, 'There is a slaughter among the people that follow Absalom.' And he also that is valiant, whose heart is as the heart of a lion, shall utterly melt, for all Israel knoweth that thy father is a mighty man, and they which be with him are valiant men. Therefore I counsel that all Israel be generally gathered unto thee, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, as the sand that is by the sea for multitude; and that thou go to battle in thine own person. So shall we come upon him in some place where he shall be found, and we will light upon him as the dew falleth on the ground; and of him and of all the men that are with him there shall not be left so much as one. Moreover, if he be gotten into a city, then shall all Israel bring ropes to that city, and we will draw it into the river, until there be not one small stone found there."

And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, "The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel." For the Lord had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Absalom.

Then said Hushai unto Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, "Thus and thus did Ahithophel counsel Absalom and the elders of Israel, and thus and thus have I counselled. Now therefore send quickly, and tell David, saying, 'Lodge not this night in the plains of the wilderness, but speedily pass

over; lest the king be swallowed up, and all the people that are with him.' "

Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz stayed by En-rogel, for they might not be seen to come into the city; and a wench went and told them; and they went and told king David. Nevertheless a lad saw them, and told Absalom; but they went both of them away quickly, and came to a man's house in Bahurim, which had a well in his court; whither they went down. And the woman took and spread a covering over the well mouth, and spread ground corn thereon; and the thing was not known. When Absalom's servants came to the woman to the house, they said, "Where is Ahimaaz and Jonathan?"

"They be gone over the brook of water," the woman said. And when they had sought and could not find them, they returned to Jerusalem.

After they were departed, Jonathan and Ahimaaz came up out of the well, and went and told king David, and said, "Arise, and pass quickly over the water, for thus hath Ahithophel counselled against you." Then David arose, and all the people that were with him, and they passed over Jordan. By the morning light there lacked not one of them that was not gone over Jordan.

When Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed he saddled his ass, and arose, gat him home to his house, to his city, put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father. And Absalom passed over Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him, and Absalom made Amasa captain of the host instead of Joab. So Israel and Absalom pitched in the land of Gilead.

When David was come to Mahanaim, Shobi the son of Nahash and Machir the son of Ammiel and Barzillai the Gileadite brought beds and basins and earthen vessels, and

wheat and barley and flour, and parched corn, and beans and lentiles, and parched pulse and honey and butter and sheep and cheese of kine for David, and for the people that were with him to eat. For they said, "The people is hungry and weary and thirsty in the wilderness." And David mustered the people that were with him, and set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them. He sent forth a third part of the people under the hand of Joab and a third part under the hand of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and a third part under the hand of Ittai the Gittite.

"I will surely go forth with you myself also," the king said unto the people. But the people answered, "Thou shalt not go forth. If we flee away, they will not care for us; neither if half of us die, will they care for us. But thou art worth ten thousand of us; therefore now it is better that thou succour us out of the city."

"What seemeth you best I will do," said the king. And he stood by the gate side, and all the people came out by hundreds and by thousands. And the king commanded Joab and Abishai and Ittai, "Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom." And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains charge concerning Absalom.

So the people went out into the field against Israel, and the battle was in the wood of Ephraim, where the people of Israel were slain before the servants of David, and there was there a great slaughter that day of twenty thousand men, for the battle was there scattered over the face of all the country, and the wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured. And Absalom met the servants of David. He rode upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth;

and the mule that was under him went away. And a certain man saw it, and told Joab, and said, "Behold, I saw Absalom hanged in an oak."

"Behold, thou sawest him," said Joab, "and why didst thou not smite him there to the ground? I would have given thee ten shekels of silver and a girdle."

"Though I should receive a thousand shekels of silver in mine hand, yet would I not put forth mine hand against the king's son; for in our hearing the king charged thee and Abishai and Ittai, saying, 'Beware that none touch the young man Absalom.' Otherwise I should have wrought falsehood against mine own life; for there is no matter hid from the king, and thou thyself wouldest have set thyself against me."

Then said Joab, "I may not tarry thus with thee." And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak; and ten young men that bare Joab's armour compassed about and smote Absalom, and slew him. And Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing after Israel, for Joab held back the people. And they took Absalom, and cast him into a great pit in the wood, and laid a very great heap of stones upon him; and all Israel fled every one to his tent.

Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok, "Let me now run and bear the king tidings, how that the Lord hath avenged him of his enemies."

And Joab said unto him, "Thou shalt not bear tidings this day, but thou shalt bear tidings another day. This day thou shalt bear no tidings, because the king's son is dead." Then said Joab to Cushi, "Go tell the king what thou hast seen." And Cushi bowed himself unto Joab, and ran.

Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok yet again to Joab, "But howsoever, let me, I pray thee, also run after Cushi."

"Wherefore wilt thou run, my son, seeing that thou hast no tidings ready?" said Joab.

"But howsoever," said he, "let me run."

And Joab said, "Run." Then Ahimaaz ran by the way of the plain, and overran Cushi.

And David sat between the two gates; and the watchman went up to the roof over the gate unto the wall, and lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, a man running alone. And the watchman cried, and told the king, and the king said, "If he be alone, there is tidings in his mouth." And he came apace, and drew near. And the watchman saw another man running, and he called unto the porter, "Behold, another man running alone."

"He also bringeth tidings," said the king.

"Me thinketh the running of the foremost is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok," said the watchman.

"He is a good man, and cometh with good tidings," the king said.

And Ahimaaz called unto the king, "All is well," and he fell down to the earth upon his face before the king, and said, "Blessed be the Lord thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king."

And the king said, "Is the young man Absalom safe?"

"When Joab sent the king's servant, and me thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what it was," answered Ahimaaz.

And the king said unto him, "Turn aside, and stand here." And he turned aside, and stood still.

And behold, Cushi came; and Cushi said, "Tidings, my lord the king; the Lord hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee."

And the king said unto Cushi, "Is the young man Absalom safe?"

And Cushi answered, "The enemies of my lord the king

and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt be as that young man is."

And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept; and as he went, thus he said, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

And it was told Joab, "Behold the king weepeth and mourneth for Absalom." And the victory that day was turned into mourning unto all the people, for the people heard say that day how the king was grieved for his son. And the people gat them by stealth that day into the city, as people being ashamed steal away when they flee in battle. But the king covered his face, and the king cried with a loud voice, "O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

And Joab came into the house to the king, and said, "Thou hast shamed this day the faces of all thy servants, which this day have saved thy life, and the lives of thy sons and of thy daughters, and the lives of thy wives, and the lives of thy concubines, in that thou lovest thine enemies and hatest thy friends, for thou hast declared this day that thou regardest neither princes nor servants; for this day I perceive, that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well. Now therefore arise, go forth, and speak comfortably unto thy servants, for I swear by the Lord, if thou go not forth, there will not tarry one with thee this night, and that will be worse unto thee than all the evil that befall thee from thy youth until now."

Then the king arose and sat in the gate. And they told unto all the people, saying, "Behold, the king doth sit in the gate." And all the people came before the king; for Israel had fled every man to his tent.¹

2 SAMUEL iii. 2-5, xiii. 22-39, xiv, xv, xvi, xvii, xviii, xix. 1-8

¹ For David's return to Jerusalem and his treatment of Shimei and Mephibosheth and the final quelling of the rebellion see 2 Sam. xix and xx.

S O L O M O N

i. ADONIJAH'S CONSPIRACY

Now King David was old and stricken in years; and they covered him with clothes, but he gat no heat. Wherefore his servants said unto him, "Let there be sought for my lord the king a young virgin. Let her stand before the king, and let her cherish him, and let her lie in thy bosom, that my lord the king may get heat." So they sought for a fair damsel throughout all the coasts of Israel, and found Abishag a Shunammite, and brought her to the king. The damsel was very fair, and cherished the king, and ministered to him, but the king knew her not.

Then Adonijah¹ exalted himself, saying, "I will be king"; and he prepared him chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him. And his father had not displeased him at any time in saying, "Why hast thou done so?" He also was a very goodly man, and his mother bare him after Absalom.

He conferred with Joab the son of Zeruiah, and with Abiathar the priest, and they following Adonijah helped him. But Zadok the priest and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and Nathan the prophet, and Shimei, and Rei, and the mighty men which belonged to David, were not with Adonijah. And he slew sheep and oxen and fat cattle by the stone of Zoheleth, which is by En-rogel, and called all his brethren the king's sons, and all the men of Judah the king's servants. But Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah, and the mighty men, and Solomon his brother he called not. Wherefore Nathan spake unto Bath-sheba the mother of Solomon saying, "Hast thou not heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith doth

¹ One of David's sons.—ED.

reign, and David our lord knoweth it not? Now therefore come, let me, I pray thee, give thee counsel, that thou mayest save thine own life, and the life of thy son Solomon. Go and get thee in unto the king David, and say unto him, 'Didst not thou, my Lord, O king, swear unto thine handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne? Why then doth Adonijah reign?' Behold, while thou yet talkest there with the king, I also will come in after thee, and confirm thy words."

Bath-sheba went in unto the king into the chamber: and the king was very old; and Abishag the Shunammite ministered unto the king. And Bath-sheba bowed, and did obesiance unto the king. And the king said. "What wouldest thou?"

"My lord," she said, "thou swarest by the Lord thy God unto thine handmaid, saying, 'Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne.' And now, behold, Adonijah reigneth; and now, my lord the king, thou knowest it not. He hath slain oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the sons of the king, and Abiathar the priest, and Joab the captain of the host, but Solomon thy servant hath he not called. And thou, my lord, O king, the eyes of all Israel are upon thee, that thou shouldest tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him. Otherwise it shall come to pass when the lord my king shall sleep with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon shall be counted offenders."

And lo, while she yet talked with the king, Nathan the prophet also came in. And they told the king, saying, "Behold Nathan the prophet." When he was come in before the king, he bowed himself before the king, with his face to the ground, and said, "My lord, O king, hast thou said, 'Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne'? For he is gone down this day and hath slain oxen and fat cattle

and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the king's sons, and the captains of the host, and Abiathar the priest; and behold, they eat and drink before him, and say, 'God save king Adonijah.' But me, even me thy servant, and Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and thy servant Solomon, hath he not called. Is this thing done by my lord the king, and thou hast not showed it unto thy servant, who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?"

Then king David answered, "Call me Bath-sheba."

And she came into the king's presence, and stood before the king. And the king sware, and said, "As the Lord liveth, that hath redeemed my soul out of all distress, even as I sware unto thee by the Lord God of Israel, saying, 'Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead,' even so will I certainly do this day."

Then Bath-sheba bowed with her face to the earth, and did reverence to the king, and said, "Let my lord king David live for ever."

"Call me Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada." And they came before the king, and he said unto them, "Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule, and bring him down to Gihon. Let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel, and blow ye with the trumpet, and say, 'God save king Solomon.' Then ye shall come up after him, that he may come and sit upon the throne; for he shall be king in my stead; and I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah."

And Benaiah answered, "Amen. The Lord God of my lord the king say so too. As the Lord hath been with my lord the king, even so be he with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord king David."

So Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah

the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, went down and caused Solomon to ride upon king David's mule, and brought him to Gihon. And Zadok the priest took an horn of oil out of the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon; and they blew the trumpet; and all the people said, "God save king Solomon."

All the people came up after him; and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them. Adonijah and all the guests that were with him heard it as they had made an end of eating, and when Joab heard the sound of the trumpet he said, "Wherefore is this noise of the city being in an uproar?"

While he yet spake, behold, Jonathan the son of Abiathar the priest came, and Adonijah said unto him, "Come in; for thou art a valiant man, and bringest good tidings."

"Verily our lord king David hath made Solomon king," Jonathan answered. "The king hath sent with him Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and they have caused him to ride upon the king's mule. And Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king in Gihon, and they are come up from thence rejoicing, so that the city rang again. This is the noise that ye have heard. And also Solomon sitteth on the throne of the kingdom. Moreover the king's servants came to bless our lord king David saying, 'God make the name of Solomon better than thy name, and make his throne greater than thy throne.' And the king bowed himself upon the bed. Also thus said the king, 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which hath given one to sit on my throne this day, mine eyes even seeing it.' "

And all the guests that were with Adonijah were afraid, and rose up, and went every man his way. And Adonijah

feared because of Solomon, and arose and went, and caught hold on the horns of the altar.

It was told Solomon, saying, "Behold, Adonijah feareth king Solomon. Lo, he hath caught hold on the horns of the altar, saying, 'Let king Solomon swear unto me to-day that he will not slay his servant with the sword.' "

"If he will show himself a worthy man," said Solomon, "there shall not an hair of him fall to the earth; but if wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die." So king Solomon sent, and they brought him down from the altar. And he came and bowed himself to king Solomon; and Solomon said unto him, "Go to thine house."

Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die, and he charged Solomon his son, saying, "I go the way of all the earth. Be thou strong therefore and show thyself a man; and keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself; that the Lord may continue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, 'If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel.' "

So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David. Then sat Solomon upon the throne of David his father, and his kingdom was established greatly.

I KINGS i, ii. 1-4, 10, 12

2. AN UNDERSTANDING HEART

Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David his father; only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places. The king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the

great high place; a thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar. In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night. And God said, "Ask what I shall give thee."

And Solomon said, "Thou hast showed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father; and I am but a little child. I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad; for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?"

The speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. And God said unto him, "Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life: neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thy enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment, behold, I have done according to thy words, lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honour, so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days. And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days." And Solomon awoke and behold, it was a dream; and he came to Jerusalem.

Then came there two women that were harlots unto the king, and stood before him. And the one woman said, "O

my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house, and I was delivered of a child with her in the house. And it came to pass on the third day after that I was delivered, that this woman was delivered also; and we were together; there was no stranger with us in the house, save we two in the house. This woman's child died in the night, because she overlaid it. And she arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while thine handmaid slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom. And when I arose in the morning to give my child suck, behold it was dead; and when I had considered it in the morning, behold it was not my son which I did bear."

The other woman said, "Nay; but the living is my son, and the dead is thy son."

And this said, "No; but the dead is thy son, and the living is my son." Thus they spake before the king.

Then said the king, "The one saith, 'This is my son that liveth, and thy son is the dead'; and the other saith, 'Nay; but thy son is the dead, and my son is the living.' Bring me a sword."

And they brought a sword before the king, and the king said, "Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other."

Then spake the woman whose the living child was unto the king, for her bowels yearned upon her son, "O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it."

But the other said, "Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it."

Then the king answered, "Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. She is the mother thereof."

And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to do judgment.

3. THE SPLITTING OF THE KINGDOM

King Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites. He had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines, and his wives turned away his heart. It came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods; and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father, and Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord. And Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, Solomon's servant, even he lifted up his hand against the king. Jeroboam was a mighty man of valour, and Solomon seeing the young man that he was industrious, he made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph.

And it came to pass at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way; and he had clad himself with a new garment. They two were alone in the field, and Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces, and said to Jeroboam, "Take thee ten pieces. Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, 'Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee. (But he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel), because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father. Howbeit I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand; but I will make him prince all the days of his life for David

my servant's sake, whom I chose, because he kept my commandments and my statutes. But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it unto thee, even ten tribes. And unto his son will I give one tribe that David my servant may have a light always before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there. I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel. And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee and wilt walk in my ways, and do that is right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments as David my servant did, that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee. And I will for this afflict the seed of David but not for ever.' "

Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam; and Jeroboam arose, and fled into Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon. The time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel was forty years. And Solomon slept with his fathers and was buried in the city of David his father, and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead.

Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel were come to Shechem to make him king. And it came to pass, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who was yet in Egypt, heard of it, that they sent and called him. And Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel came, and spake unto Rehoboam, "Thy father made our yoke grievous. Now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee."

"Depart yet for three days, then come again to me," Rehoboam said unto them. And the people departed.

King Rehoboam consulted with the old men, that stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, "How do ye advise that I may answer this people?" And they spake, "If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt

serve them, and answer them and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever."

But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him, and said unto them, "What counsel give ye that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, 'Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us lighter'?"

And the young men that were grown up with him spake, "Thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, 'Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us,' thus shalt thou say unto them, 'My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins. Whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke. My father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.'"

So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had appointed. And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him; and spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, "My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke. My father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions."

So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, "What portion have we in David? Neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse. To your tents, O Israel! Now see to thine own house, David." So Israel departed unto their tents. But as for the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them. Then king Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was over the tribute; and all Israel stoned him with stones, that he died. Therefore king Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem. So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day. When all Israel

heard that Jeroboam was come again, they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Israel. There was none that followed the house of David but the tribe of Judah only.

When Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah, with the tribe of Benjamin, an hundred and four score thousand chosen men, which were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, to bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam the son of Solomon. But the word of God came unto Shemaiah the man of God saying, "Speak unto Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and unto all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the remnant of the people saying, Thus saith the Lord, 'Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel. Return every man to his house, for this thing is from me.' " They hearkened therefore to the word of the Lord, and returned to depart, according to the word of the Lord.

I KINGS xi. 1, 3, 4, 6, 26, 28-43, xii. 1-24

“A L A S , M Y B R O T H E R !”

JEROBOAM said in his heart, “Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David. If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah.” Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto the people, “It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.” So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Beth-el the fifteenth day of the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel. He offered upon the altar, and burnt incense.

There came a man of God out of Judah by the word of the Lord unto Beth-el; and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense. And the man of God cried against the altar in the word of the Lord, and said, “O altar, altar! Thus saith the Lord, ‘Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men’s bones shall be burnt upon thee.’” And he gave a sign the same day, saying, “This is the sign which the Lord hath spoken. Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out.”

When king Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, which had cried against the altar in Beth-el, he put forth his hand from the altar, saying, “Lay hold on him.” And his hand, which he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him. The altar also was rent, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the

sign which the man of God had given by the word of the Lord.

The king said unto the man of God, "Entreat now the face of the Lord thy God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored me again." And the man of God besought the Lord, and the king's hand was restored him again, and became as it was before.

"Come home with me, and refresh thyself, and I will give thee a reward," said the king.

"If thou wilt give me half thine house," said the man of God, "I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place, for so was it charged me by the word of the Lord saying, 'Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest.' " So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Beth-el.

Now there dwelt an old prophet in Beth-el; and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Beth-el. The words which he had spoken unto the king them they told also to their father. And their father said unto them, "What way went he?" For his sons had seen what way the man of God went which came from Judah. And he said unto his sons, "Saddle me the ass."

So they saddled him the ass, and he rode thereon, and went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak, and said unto him, "Art thou the man of God that camest from Judah?"

"I am."

"Come home with me and eat bread," said the old prophet.

And the man of God said, "I may not return with thee, nor go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in this place. For it was said to me by the word of the Lord, 'Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that thou camest.' "

The old prophet said unto him, "I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the Lord, saying, 'Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water.'" But he lied unto him.

So the man of God went back with the old prophet and did eat bread in his house, and drank water. And as they sat at the table, the word of the Lord came unto the prophet that brought him back; and he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah saying, "Thus saith the Lord, 'Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the Lord, and hast not kept the commandment which the Lord thy God commanded thee, but camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place of the which the Lord did say to thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water, thy carcase shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers.'"

And it came to pass after he had eaten bread, and after he had drunk, that the old prophet saddled for him the ass, and when the man of God was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him, and his carcase was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it, the lion also stood by the carcase. And, behold, men passed by, and saw the carcase cast in the way, and the lion standing by the carcase, and they came and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt. And when the prophet that brought him back from the way heard thereof, he said, "It is the man of God, who was disobedient unto the word of the Lord. Therefore the Lord hath delivered him unto the lion, which hath torn him, and slain him, according to the word of the Lord which he spake unto him." And he spake to his sons, saying, "Saddle me the ass."

And they saddled him, and the old prophet went and found the carcase of the man of God cast in the way, and the ass and the lion standing by the carcase; the lion had not eaten

the carcase nor torn the ass. The prophet took up the carcase of the man of God, and laid it upon the ass, and brought it back, and the old prophet came to the city, to mourn and to bury him. He laid his carcase in his own grave, and they mourned over him, saying, "Alas, my brother!"

And after he had buried him, he spake to his sons, "When I am dead, then bury me in the sepulchre wherein the man of God is buried. Lay my bones beside his bones. The saying which he cried by the word of the Lord against the altar in Beth-el, and against all the houses of the high places which are in the cities of Samaria, shall surely come to pass."

1 KINGS xii. 26-28, 33, xiii. 1-32

ELIJAH

I. THE WIDOW'S CRUSE

IN the thirty and eighth year of Asa king of Judah began Ahab the son of Omri to reign over Israel; and Ahab reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty and two years, and he did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him. And, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, he took to wife Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him. He reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria, and he made a grove. Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.

And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." And the word of the Lord came unto him, "Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And it shall be that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there."

So he went and did according unto the word of the Lord; for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith. The ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evenings; and he drank of the brook. And after a while the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land. And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, "Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon and dwell there. Behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee." So he arose and went to Zarephath; and when

he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks; and he called to her, "Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink." And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, "Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand."

"As the Lord thy God liveth," she said, "I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse, and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it and die."

"Fear not," said Elijah, "go and do as thou hast said; but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, 'The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth.' "

She went and did according to the saying of Elijah, and she and he and her house did eat many days. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah.

It came to pass after these things, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick; and his sickness was so sore that there was no breath left in him. And she said unto Elijah, "What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? Art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?"

"Give me thy son," he said, and he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed, and cried unto the Lord, "O Lord my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son?" And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the Lord, "O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again."

And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived, and Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother; and said, "See, thy son liveth."

And the woman said unto Elijah, "Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth."

I KINGS xvi. 29-33, xvii

2. "THE LORD, HE IS THE GOD"

After many days, the word of the Lord came to Elijah, saying, "Go show thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth." And Elijah went to show himself unto Ahab. And there was a sore famine in Samaria. And Ahab called Obadiah, which was the governor of his house. (Now Obadiah feared the Lord greatly, for when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the Lord, Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.) And Ahab said unto Obadiah, "Go into the land, unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks. Peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive, that we lose not all the beasts."

So they divided the land between them to pass throughout it: Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself. And as Obadiah went in the way, behold, Elijah met him, and Obadiah knew him, and fell on his face and said, "Art thou that my lord Elijah?"

Elijah answered him, "I am. Go, tell thy lord, 'Behold, Elijah is here.'"

"What have I sinned, that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab, to slay me?" said Obadiah.

“As the Lord thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee; and when they said, ‘He is not there,’ he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not. And now thou sayest ‘Go tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here.’ And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the spirit of the Lord shall carry thee whither I know not, and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me; but I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth. Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the Lord, how I hid an hundred men of the Lord’s prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water? And now thou sayest, ‘Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here,’ and he shall slay me.”

“As the Lord of Hosts liveth before whom I stand, I will surely show myself unto him to-day,” said Elijah.

So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him: and Ahab went to meet Elijah, and when Ahab saw Elijah, he said unto him, “Art thou he that troubleth Israel?”

“I have not troubled Israel,” he answered, “but thou, and thy father’s house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim. Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which feast at Jezebel’s table.” So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel.

And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, “How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him, but if Baal, then follow him.” And the people answered him not a word.

Then said Elijah unto the people, “I, even I only, remain a prophet of the Lord; but Baal’s prophets are four hundred

and fifty men. Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under; and I will dress the other bullock and lay it on wood, and put no fire under. And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord; and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God." And all the people answered and said, "It is well spoken." And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, "Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under."

They took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, "O Baal, hear us!" But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made. And it came to pass at noon that Elijah mocked them, and said, "Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked." And they cried aloud, and cut themselves, after their manner, with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them. And it came to pass when mid-day was past, and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.

And Elijah said unto all the people. "Come near unto me." And all the people came near unto him; and he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down. And Elijah took twelve stones according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the Lord came, saying, "Israel shall be thy name"; and with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord, and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed. He put the wood in order and cut the bullock in pieces, and

laid him on the wood, and said, "Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood."

And he said, "Do it the second time," and they did it the second time. And he said, "Do it the third time," and they did it the third time. And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water.

And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me; that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again."

Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and said, "The Lord, he is the God! The Lord, he is the God!"

And Elijah said unto them, "Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape." And they took them; and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.

And Elijah said unto Ahab, "Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain." So Ahab went up to eat and to drink, and Elijah went up to the top of Carmel, and cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees, and said to his servant, "Go up now, look towards the sea."

And the servant went up and looked, and said, "There is nothing."

"Go again seven times," said Elijah.

And it came to pass at the seventh time, that the servant

said, "Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea like a man's hand."

And Elijah said, "Go up, say unto Ahab, 'Prepare thy chariots, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not.'"

In the meanwhile, the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel. And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

I KINGS xviii

3. THE STILL SMALL VOICE

Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah saying, "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to-morrow about this time."

And when he saw that, he arose and went for his life and came to Beer-sheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there. He himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a juniper tree; and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers." And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, "Arise and eat." And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head; and he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him, and said, "Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee."

He arose and did eat and drink, and went in the strength

of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God; and he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there. And behold the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice. And it was so when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave, and behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, "What doest thou here, Elijah?"

And he said, "I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts, because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away."

"Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus," the Lord said, "and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria. Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel, and Elisha the son of Shaphat shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay; and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay. Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him."

So Elijah departed hence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth; and Elisha passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him. And Elisha left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said, "Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee."

And Elijah said, "Go back again, for what have I done to

thee?" And Elisha returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.

I KINGS xix

4. AHAB AND BEN-HADAD

Ben-hadad the king of Syria gathered all his hosts together; there were thirty and two kings with him, and horses and chariots; and he went up and besieged Samaria, and warred against it. And he sent messengers to Ahab king of Israel into the city, and said unto him, "Thus saith Ben-hadad, 'Thy silver and thy gold is mine, thy wives also and thy children, even the goodliest are mine.' "

"My Lord, O king," answered the king of Israel, "according to thy saying, I am thine, and all that I have."

And the messengers came again, and said, "Thus speaketh Ben-hadad, 'Although I have sent unto thee, saying, Thou shalt deliver me thy silver, and thy gold, and thy wives, and thy children: yet I will send my servants unto thee to-morrow about this time, and they shall search thine house, and the houses of thy servants; and it shall be that whatsoever is pleasant in thine eyes they shall put it in their hand, and take it away.' "

Then the king of Israel called all the elders of the land, and said, "Mark, I pray you, and see how this man seeketh mischief; for he sent unto me for my wives, and for my children, and for my silver, and for my gold; and I denied him not."

"Hearken not unto him, nor consent," said all the elders, and all the people. Wherefore he said unto the messengers of Ben-hadad, "Tell my lord the king, all that thou didst send

for to thy servant at the first I will do, but this thing I may not do."

And the messengers departed, and brought him word again. And Ben-hadad sent unto him, and said, "The gods do so unto me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people that follow me."

"Tell him," answered the king of Israel, "let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off." When Ben-hadad heard this message, as he was drinking, he and the kings in the pavilions, he said unto his servants, "Set yourselves in array." And they set themselves in array against the city.

And behold there came a prophet unto Ahab king of Israel, saying, "Thus saith the Lord, 'Hast thou seen all this great multitude? Behold, I will deliver it into thine hand this day; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord.' "

"By whom?" said Ahab.

"Thus saith the Lord, 'Even by the young men of the princes of the provinces,'" said the prophet.

"Who shall order the battle?" said Ahab.

"Thou," the prophet answered.

Then Ahab mustered the young men of the princes of the provinces, and they were two hundred and thirty-two; and after that he mustered all the people, even all the children of Israel, being seven thousand. And they went out at noon. But Ben-hadad was drinking himself drunk in the pavilions, he and the kings, the thirty and two kings that helped him. The young men of the princes of the provinces went out first; and Ben-hadad sent out, and they told him, "There are men come out of Samaria."

"Whether they be come out for peace, take them alive; or whether they be come out for war, take them alive," Ben-hadad said. So these young men of the princes of the provinces came out of the city, and the army which followed

them. And they slew every one his man, and the Syrians fled, and Israel pursued them. And Ben-hadad the king of Syria escaped on an horse with the horsemen. And the king of Israel went out, and smote the horses and chariots, and slew the Syrians with a great slaughter.

And the prophet came to the king of Israel, and said, "Go, strengthen thyself and mark, and see what thou doest, for at the return of the year the king of Syria will come up against thee."

And the servants of the king of Syria said unto him, "Their gods are the gods of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we; but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they. And do this thing; take the kings away, every man out of his place, and put captains in their rooms. And number thee an army like the army that thou hast lost, horse for horse, and chariot for chariot; and we will fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they." He hearkened unto their voice, and did so, and at the return of the year, Ben-hadad mustered the Syrians and went up to Aphek, to fight against Israel. And the children of Israel were mustered and were victualled and went against them; and the children of Israel pitched before them like two little flocks of kids; but the Syrians filled the country.

And there came a man of God, and spake unto the king of Israel, "Thus saith the Lord, 'Because the Syrians have said, The Lord is God of the hills, but he is not God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand; and ye shall know that I am the Lord.' "

They pitched one over against the other seven days; and so it was that in the seventh day the battle was joined; and the children of Israel slew of the Syrians an hundred thousand footmen in one day. But the rest fled to Aphek, into the city; and there a wall fell upon twenty and seven

thousand of the men that were left. And Ben-hadad fled, and came into the city into an inner chamber. And his servants said unto him, "Behold now, we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel are merciful kings, let us, I pray thee, put sackcloth on our loins, and ropes upon our heads, and go out to the king of Israel. Peradventure he will save thy life." So they girded sackcloth on their loins, and put ropes on their heads, and came to the king of Israel, and said, "Thy servant Ben-hadad saith, 'I pray thee, let me live.' "

"Is he yet alive?" said the king of Israel. "He is my brother." Now the men did diligently observe whether any thing would come from him, and did hastily catch it, and they said, "Thy brother Ben-hadad."

"Go ye, bring him." Then Ben-hadad came forth to Ahab; and he caused him to come up into the chariot, and said unto him, "The cities which my father took from thy father I will restore; and thou shalt make streets for thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria."

Then said Ahab, "I will send thee away with this covenant." So he made a covenant with him, and sent him away.

And a certain man of the sons of the prophets said unto his neighbour in the word of the Lord, "Smite me, I pray thee." And the man refused to smite him. Then said he unto him, "Because thou hast not obeyed the voice of the Lord, behold, as soon as thou art departed from me, a lion shall slay thee." And as soon as he departed from him, a lion found him, and slew him. Then he found another man and said, "Smite me, I pray thee." And the man smote him, so that in smiting he wounded him. So the prophet departed, and waited for the king by the way, and disguised himself with ashes upon his face. And as the king passed by, he cried unto the king, "Thy servant went out unto the midst of the battle; and behold a man turned aside, and brought a man unto me, and said, 'Keep this man. If by any means he be

missing then shall thy life be for his life, or else thou shalt pay a talent of silver,' and as thy servant was busy here and there he was gone."

The king of Israel said, "So shall thy judgment be. Thyself hast decided it." And he hasted and took the ashes away from his face and the king of Israel discerned him that he was of the prophets.

"Thus saith the Lord," the prophet said unto Ahab. "Because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people.'" And the king of Israel went to his house heavy and displeased, and came to Samaria.

I KINGS XX

5. NABOTH'S VINEYARD

It came to pass that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel, hard by the palace of Ahab, king of Samaria. And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, "Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near unto my house, and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; or, if it seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money."

"The Lord forbid it me," said Naboth, "that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee."

Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him; for he had said, "I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers"; and he laid down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread. But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said, "Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread?"

"Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto

him, 'Give me thy vineyard for money, or else, if it please thee, I will give thee another vineyard for it': and he answered, 'I will not give thee my vineyard.' "

"Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel?" Jezebel said. "Arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry. I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite."

So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that were in his city dwelling with Naboth. And she wrote in the letters, "Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people. And set two men, sons of Belial, before him, to bear witness against him, saying, 'Thou didst blaspheme God and the king'; and then carry him out and stone him, that he may die."

The men of the city, even the elders and the nobles who were the inhabitants in his city, did as Jezebel had sent unto them, and as it was written in the letters which she had sent unto them. They proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people. And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat before him; and the men of Belial witnessed against him, even against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, "Naboth did blaspheme God and the king." Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died. Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, "Naboth is stoned, and is dead."

When Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned and was dead, she said to Ahab, "Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money, for Naboth is not alive, but dead." And when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite to take possession of it.

And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, "Arise, go down to meet Ahab, king of Israel, which

is in Samaria. Behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it. And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, 'Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession?' And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, 'Thus saith the Lord, in the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine.' "

And Ahab said to Elijah, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?"

And Elijah answered, "I have found thee because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord. 'Behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity, and will make thine house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked me to anger, and made Israel to sin.' And of Jezebel also spake the Lord, saying, 'The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. Him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat.' " But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up. And he did very abominably in following idols, according to all things as did the Amorites, whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel.

When Ahab heard these words, he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted and lay in sackcloth and went softly.

And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, "Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? Because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring evil in his days; but in his son's days will I bring evil upon his house."

6. THE BATTLE OF RAMOTH-GILEAD

They continued three years without war between Syria and Israel, and in the third year Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to the king of Israel. And the king of Israel said unto his servants, "Know ye that Ramoth in Gilead is ours, and we be still and take it not out of the hand of the king of Syria?" And he said unto Jehoshaphat, "Wilt thou go with me to battle in Ramoth-gilead?"

"I am as thou art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses," said Jehoshaphat. "Enquire, I pray thee, at the word of the Lord to-day."

Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said unto them, "Shall I go against Ramoth-gilead to battle or shall I forbear?"

And they said, "Go up, for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king."

But Jehoshaphat said, "Is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides, that we might enquire of him?"

"There is yet one man," said the king of Israel, "Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may enquire of the Lord: but I hate him, for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil."

"Let not the king say so," said Jehoshaphat.

Then the king of Israel called an officer, and said, "Hasten hither Micaiah the son of Imlah." And the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah sat each on his throne, having put on their robes, in an open place in the entrance of the gate of Samaria: and all the prophets prophesied before them. And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made him horns of iron; and he said, "Thus saith the Lord, 'With these shalt thou push the Syrians until thou have consumed them.' " And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, "Go up to

Ramoth-gilead, and prosper; for the Lord shall deliver it into the king's hand."

The messenger that was gone to call Micaiah spake unto him, "Behold now, the words of the prophets declare good unto the king with one mouth; let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak that which is good."

"As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak," said Micaiah. So he came to the king, and the king said unto him, "Micaiah, shall we go against Ramoth-gilead to battle or shall we forbear?"

"Go and prosper," he answered, "for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king."

"How many times shall I adjure thee that thou tell me nothing but that which is true in the name of the Lord?" said the king.

And Micaiah said, "I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd. And the Lord said, 'These have no master. Let them return every man to his house in peace.'"

"Did I not tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil?" said the king of Israel unto Jehoshaphat.

And Micaiah said, "Hear thou therefore the word of the Lord. I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. And the Lord said, 'Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?' And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit and stood before the Lord, and said, 'I will persuade him.' And the Lord said unto him, 'Wherewith?' And he said, 'I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' And he said, 'Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also. Go forth and do so.' Now,

therefore, behold, the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee."

Then Zedekiah went near, and smote Micaiah on the cheek, and said, "Which way went the Spirit of the Lord from me to speak unto thee?"

"Behold, thou shalt see in that day, when thou shalt go into an inner chamber to hide thyself," said Micaiah.

"Take Micaiah," said the king of Israel, "and carry him back unto Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son; and say, 'Thus saith the king, Put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction, and with water of affliction, until I come in peace.' "

And Micaiah said, "If thou return at all in peace, the Lord hath not spoken by me. Hearken, O people, every one of you."

So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth-gilead, and the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, "I will disguise myself, and enter into the battle; but put thou on thy robes." And the king of Israel disguised himself, and went into the battle.

Now the king of Syria commanded his thirty and two captains, that had rule over his chariots, saying, "Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel." And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, "Surely it is the king of Israel." And they turned aside to fight against him; and Jehoshaphat cried out. And when the captains of the chariots perceived that it was not the king of Israel they turned back from pursuing him.

And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness. Wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, "Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host, for I am wounded."

The battle increased that day; and the king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians, and died at even; and the blood ran out of his wound into the midst of the chariot. And there went a proclamation throughout the host about the going down of the sun, saying, "Every man to his city, and every man to his own country."

So the king died and was brought to Samaria, and they buried the king in Samaria. And one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria; and the dogs licked up his blood; and they washed his armour, according unto the word of the Lord which he spake.

I KINGS xxii. 1-38

7. FIRE FROM HEAVEN

Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab. And Ahaziah¹ fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber that was in Samaria, and was sick: and he sent messengers, and said unto them, "Go, enquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron whether I shall recover of this disease."

But the angel of the Lord said to Elijah the Tishbite, "Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say unto them, 'Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to enquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron?' Now therefore thus saith the Lord, 'Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.'" And Elijah departed. And when the messengers turned back unto him, Ahaziah said unto them, "Why are ye now turned back?"

"There came a man up to meet us," they said, "and said unto us, 'Go, turn again unto the king that sent you, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Is it not because there is not a God in Israel that thou sendest to enquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron? Therefore thou shalt not come down

¹ The son of Ahab, who succeeded his father as king of Israel.

from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.' "

"What manner of man was he which came up to meet you, and told you these words?" said Ahaziah.

"He was an hairy man," they answered, "and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins."

"It is Elijah the Tishbite," said Ahaziah. Then the king sent unto him a captain of fifty with his fifty. And the captain went up to him; and, behold, Elijah sat on the top of an hill. And the captain spake unto him, "Thou man of God, the king hath said, 'Come down.' "

And Elijah answered, "If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty." And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.

Again also Ahaziah sent unto him another captain of fifty with his fifty. And the captain said unto him, "O man of God, thus hath the king said, 'Come down quickly.' "

And Elijah answered, "If I be a man of God let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty." And the fire of God came down from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.

And Ahaziah sent again a captain of the third fifty with his fifty. And the third captain of fifty went up, and came and fell on his knees before Elijah, and besought him, "O man of God, I pray thee, let my life and the life of these fifty thy servants be precious in thy sight. Behold, there came fire down from heaven, and burnt up the two captains of the former fifties with their fifties; therefore let my life now be precious in thy sight."

And the angel of the Lord said unto Elijah, "Go down with him; be not afraid of him." And Elijah arose, and went down with him unto the king, and said, "Thus saith the Lord, 'Forasmuch as thou hast sent messengers to enquire

of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron, is it not because there is no God in Israel to enquire of his word? Therefore thou shalt not come down off that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.' "

So he died according to the word of the Lord which Elijah had spoken; and Jehoram reigned in his stead.

2 KINGS i. 1-17

ELISHA

1. "THE CHARIOT OF ISRAEL"

AND it came to pass when the Lord would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. And Elijah said unto Elisha, "Tarry here, I pray thee, for the Lord hath sent me to Beth-el."

"As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee," Elisha said. So they went down to Beth-el, and the sons of the prophets that were at Beth-el came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, "Knowest thou that the lord will take away thy master from thy head to-day?"

"Yea, I know it, hold ye your peace," said Elisha.

And Elijah said, "Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the Lord hath sent me to Jericho."

"As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee."

So they came to Jericho, and the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho came to Elisha and said, "Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from they head to-day?"

"Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace."

And Elijah said, "Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the Lord hath sent me to Jordan."

"As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee." And they two went on. And fifty men of the sons of the prophets sent, and stood to view afar off: and they two stood by Jordan. And Elijah took his mantle and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went on dry ground. When they were gone over, Elijah said unto Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee."

And Elisha said, "I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me."

"Thou hast asked a hard thing," said Elijah, "nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so."

And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it, and cried, "My father, my father! The chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!"

And he saw him no more; and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces. He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back and stood by the bank of Jordan. And he took the mantle of Elijah, and smote the waters and said, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" And when he also had smitten the waters they parted hither and thither, and Elisha went over.

When the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, "The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha," and they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him, and said, "Behold now, there be with thy servants fifty strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master, lest peradventure the Spirit of the Lord hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley."

And Elisha said, "Ye shall not send." And when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, "Send." They sent therefore fifty men; and they sought three days, but found him not. And when they came again to Elisha, (for he tarried in Jericho), he said unto them, "Did I not say unto you, Go not?"

The men of the city said unto Elisha, "Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth; but the water is nought, and the ground barren."

"Bring me a new cruse," said Elisha, "and put salt therein." And they brought it to him; and he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, "Thus saith the Lord, 'I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land.'" So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake.

And he went up from thence unto Beth-el: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, "Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head." And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the Lord and there came forth two she-bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them.

And he went from thence to Mount Carmel; and from thence he returned to Samaria.

2 KINGS ii. 1-25

2. MOAB AND THE THREE KINGS

Mesha king of Moab was a sheep-master, and rendered unto the king of Israel an hundred thousand lambs, and an hundred thousand rams, with wool. But when Ahab was dead, the king of Moab rebelled against Jehoram, the son of Ahab the king of Israel, and king Jehoram went out of Samaria the same time, and mustered all Israel. And he sent to Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, saying, "The king of Moab hath rebelled against me. Wilt thou go with me against Moab to battle?"

And the king of Judah said, "I will go up. I am as thou art, my people as thy people, and my horses as thy horses. Which way shall we go up?"

"The way through the wilderness of Edom," Jehoram answered. So the king of Israel went, and the king of Judah,

and the king of Edom. They fetched a compass of seven days' journey and there was no water for the host, and for the cattle that followed them.

"Alas!" said the king of Israel, "that the Lord hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab!"

But Jehoshaphat said, "Is there not here a prophet of the Lord, that we may enquire of the Lord by him?"

"Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat," answered one of the king of Israel's servants, "which poured water on the hands of Elijah."

"The word of the Lord is with him," said Jehoshaphat. So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him. And Elisha said unto the king of Israel, "What have I to do with thee? Get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother."

"Nay," said Jehoram, "for the Lord hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab."

"As the Lord of hosts liveth," said Elisha, "before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee. But now bring me a minstrel."

And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon Elisha, and he said, "Thus saith the Lord, 'Make this valley full of ditches.' For thus saith the Lord, 'Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain: yet that valley shall be filled with water, that ye may drink, both ye, and your cattle, and your beasts.' And this is but a light thing in the sight of the Lord; he will deliver the Moabites also into your hand. Ye shall smite every fenced city, and every choice city, and shall fell every good tree, and stop all wells of water, and mar every good piece of land with stones." And it came to pass in the morning,

when the meat offering was offered, that, behold, there came water by the way of Edom, and the country was filled with water.

When all the Moabites heard that the kings were come up to fight against them, they gathered all that were able to put on armour, and upward, and stood in the border. They rose up early in the morning, and the sun shone upon the water, and the Moabites saw the water on the other side as red as blood; and they said, "This is blood; the kings are surely slain, and they have smitten one another. Now therefore, Moab, to the spoil!"

And when they came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and smote the Moabites, so that they fled before them: but they went forward smiting the Moabites, even in their country. They beat down the cities, and on every good piece of land cast every man his stone, and filled it; and they stopped all the wells of water, and felled all the good trees; only in Kir-haraseth left they the stones thereof; howbeit the slingers went about it, and smote it. And when the king of Moab saw that the battle was too sore for him, he took with him seven hundred men and drew swords, to break through even unto the king of Edom; but they could not. Then he took his eldest son, that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him for a burnt offering upon the wall. And there was great indignation against Israel; and as Israel saw the Moabites so desperately resolute they departed from Moab and returned to their own land.

2 KINGS iii. 4-27

3. THE WIDOW'S OIL

Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, "Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the

Lord: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen."

And Elisha said unto her, "What shall I do for thee? Tell me, what hast thou in the house?"

"Thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of oil."

"Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, even empty vessels; borrow not a few. And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full."

So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured out, and when the vessels were full, she said unto her son, "Bring me yet a vessel."

"There is not a vessel more," he said.

And the oil stayed. Then she came and told the man of God, and he said, "Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest."

2 KINGS iv. 1-7

4. DEATH IN THE POT

Elisha came again to Gilgal, and there was a dearth in the land. And the sons of the prophets were sitting before him, and he said unto his servant, "Set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets."

And one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered thereof wild gourds his lap-full, and came and shred them into the pot of the pottage: for they knew them not. So they poured out for the men to eat. And it came to pass, as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out, and said, "O thou man of God, there is death in the pot." And they could not eat thereof.

"Then bring meal," said Elisha; and he cast it into the pot. "Pour out for the people, that they may eat." And there was no harm in the pot. And there came a man from Baal-shalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the first-fruits, twenty loaves of barley, and full ears of corn in the husk thereof. And he said, "Give unto the people, that they may eat."

And his servitor said, "What I should I set this before an hundred men?"

"Give the people, that they may eat: for thus saith the Lord, They shall eat, and shall leave thereof."

So he set it before them, and they did eat, and left thereof, according to the word of the Lord.

2 KINGS iv. 38-44

5. THE SHUNAMMITE WOMAN

It fell on a day that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was, that, as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread. And she said unto her husband, "Behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God which passeth by us continually. Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick; and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither."

And it fell on a day, that he came thither, and he turned into the chamber, and lay there. And he said to Gehazi his servant, "Call this Shunammite." And when he had called her, she stood before him, and he said unto Gehazi, "Say now unto her, Behold thou hast been careful for us with all this care; what is to be done for thee? Wouldest thou be spoken for to the king or to the captain of the host?"

And she answered, "I dwell among mine own people."

"What then is to be done for her?" said Elisha.

"Verily she hath no child, and her husband is old," Gehazi answered.

"Call her." And when Gehazi had called her she stood in the door; and Elisha said, "About this season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son."

"Nay, my lord," she said, "thou man of God, do not lie unto thine handmaid." And the woman conceived, and bare a son at that season that Elisha had said unto her, according to the time of life. And when the child was grown, it fell on a day that he went out to his father to the reapers. And he said unto his father, "My head! my head!"

And the father said to a lad, "Carry him to his mother." And when he had taken him, and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died. And she went up, and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door upon him, and went out, and called unto her husband and said, "Send me, I pray thee, one of the young men, and one of the asses, that I may run to the man of God, and come again."

"Wherefore wilt thou go to him to-day?" he said. "It is neither new moon nor sabbath."

"It shall be well," she said. Then she saddled an ass, and said to her servant, "Drive and go forward; slack not thy riding for me, except I bid thee."

So she went, and came unto the man of God to mount Carmel. And it came to pass, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to Gehazi his servant, "Behold, yonder is that Shunammite. Run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, 'Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child?'"

And she answered, "It is well."

And when she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught him by the feet; but Gehazi came near to thrust her away, and the man of God said, "Let her alone; for her soul is vexed within her; and the Lord hath hid it from me, and hath not told me."

Then she said, "Did I desire a son of my lord? Did I not say, 'Do not deceive me?'"

Then Elisha said to Gehazi, "Gird up thy loins, and take my staff in thine hand, and go thy way. If thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not again: and lay my staff upon the face of the child."

And the mother of the child said, "As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee." And he arose, and followed her. And Gehazi passed on before them, and laid the staff upon the face of the child; but there was neither voice nor hearing. Wherefore he went again to meet Elisha, and told him saying, "The child is not awaked."

When Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, and laid upon his bed. He went in therefore and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the Lord. And he went up and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands; and he stretched himself upon the child, and the flesh of the child waxed warm. Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes.

And he called Gehazi, and said, "Call this Shunammite."

So Gehazi called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, "Take up thy son." Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out.

6. NAAMAN

Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria. He was also a mighty man in valour; but he was a leper. And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife. And she said unto her mistress, "Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! For he would recover him of his leprosy." And one went in, and told his lord, saying, "Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Israel."

"Go to, go," said the king of Syria, "and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel."

And Naaman departed and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment, and he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, "Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have therewith sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy."

When the king of Israel had read the letter, he rent his clothes, and said, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? Wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me."

And it was so, when Elisha, the man of God, had heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, he sent to the king, saying, "Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? Let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel." So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot and stood at the door of the house of Elisha; and Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, "Go and wash

in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean."

But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, "Behold, I thought, 'He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.' Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them, and be clean?"

So he turned, and went away in a rage. And his servants came near and spake unto him, "My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? How much rather then, when he saith to thee, 'Wash and be clean'?"

Then went he down and dipped himself seven times in Jordan according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company; and came and stood before him, and he said, "Behold, now I know that there is no God in all earth, but in Israel. Now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant."

But Elisha said, "As the Lord liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none." And Naaman urged him to take it; but he refused.

And Naaman said, "Shall there not then, I pray thee, be given to thy servant two mules' burden of earth? For thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the Lord. In this thing the Lord pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, when I bow myself down in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing."

And Elisha said unto him, "Go in peace." So he departed

from him a little way. But Gehazi the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, "Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought; but, as the Lord liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him."

So Gehazi followed after Naaman; and when Naaman saw him running after him, he lighted down from the chariot to meet him, and said, "Is all well?"

"All is well. My master hath sent me, saying, 'Behold even now there be come to me from mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets; give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver and two changes of garments.' "

"Be content, take two talents," said Naaman, and urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and laid them upon two of his servants; and they bare them before him. When he came to the tower, he took them from their hand, and bestowed them in the house, and he let the men go, and they departed. But he went in, and stood before his master.

And Elisha said unto him, "Whence comest thou, Gehazi?"

"Thy servant went no whither."

"Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee?" Elisha said. "Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and olive-yards, and vineyards, and sheep and oxen, and men-servants, and maid-servants? The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever."

And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow.

2 KINGS V

7. ELISHA AND THE SYRIANS

The king of Syria warred against Israel, and took counsel with his servants, saying, "In such and such a place shall be my camp."

And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, "Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are come down." And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice. Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, "Will ye not show me which of us is for the king of Israel?"

"None, my lord, O king," said one of his servants, "but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber."

"Go and spy where he is," said the king, "that I may send and fetch him." And it was told him, saying, "Behold he is in Dothan." Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host; and they came by night, and compassed the city about. When the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots; and his servant said unto him, "Alas! my master! How shall we do?"

"Fear not," Elisha answered, "for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." And Elisha prayed, "Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see." And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw; and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the Lord, "Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness," and he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha. And Elisha said unto them, "This is not the way, neither is this the city. Follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek."

But he led them to Samaria, and it came to pass when they were come into Samaria, that Elisha said, "Lord, open the eyes of these men, that they may see." And the Lord

opened their eyes, and they saw; and behold, they were in the midst of Samaria.

And the king of Israel said unto Elisha, when he saw them, "My father, shall I smite them? Shall I smite them?"

"Thou shalt not smite them," Elisha answered. "Wouldest thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow? Set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master." And he prepared great provision for them; and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.

2 KINGS vi. 8-23

8. THE SIEGE OF SAMARIA

Ben-hadad king of Syria gathered all his host, and went up and besieged Samaria; and there was a great famine in Samaria: and, behold, they besieged it, until an ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung for five pieces of silver.

And as the king of Israel was passing by upon the wall, there cried a woman unto him, saying, "Help, my lord, O king!"

"If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee?" he answered. "Out of the barn floor, or out of the winepress? What aileth thee?"

"This woman," she answered, "said unto me, 'Give thy son, that we may eat him to-day, and we will eat my son to-morrow.' So we boiled my son, and did eat him; and I said unto her on the next day, 'Give thy son, that we may eat him'; and she hath hid her son."

And it came to pass, when the king heard the words of the woman, that he rent his clothes; and he passed by upon the

wall, and the people looked, and behold, he had sackcloth within upon his flesh, and he said, "God do so and more also to me, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat shall stand on him this day."

But Elisha sat in his house, and the elders sat with him; and the king sent a man from before him; but ere the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, "See ye how this son of a murderer hath sent to take away mine head? Look, when the messenger cometh, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door. Is not the sound of his master's feet behind him?"

And while he yet talked with them, behold, the messenger came down unto him, and said, "Behold, this evil is of the Lord; what should I wait for the Lord any longer?"

Then Elisha said, "Hear ye the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord, 'To-morrow, about this time, shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria.' "

Then a lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God, and said, "Behold, if the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be?"

"Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof," Elisha said.

There were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate; and they said one to another, "Why sit we here until we die? If we say, 'We will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there'; and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians. If they save us alive we shall live, and if they kill us, we shall but die." And they rose up in the twilight, to go unto the camp of the Syrians; and when they were come to the uttermost part of the camp of Syria, behold there was no man there. For the Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise

of horses, even the noise of a great host; and they said one to another, "Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us." Wherefore they arose, and fled in the twilight, and left their tents, and their horses and their asses, even the camp as it was, and fled for their life.

And when these lepers came to the uttermost part of the camp, they went into one tent, and did eat and drink, and carried thence silver and gold and raiment, and went and hid it; and came again, and entered into another tent, and carried thence also, and went and hid it. Then they said one to another, "We do not well. This day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace. If we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us; now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household."

So they came and called unto the porter of the city, saying, "We came to the camp of the Syrians, and, behold, there was no man there, neither voice of a man, but horses tied, and asses tied, and the tents as they were." And he called the porters, and they told it to the king's house within.

And the king arose in the night, and said unto his servants, "I will now show you what the Syrians have done to us. They know that we be hungry; therefore are they gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, 'When they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive, and get into the city.'"

"Let some take, I pray thee," answered one of his servants, "five of the horses that remain, which are left in the city, (Behold, they are as all the multitude of Israel that are left in it; behold, I say, they are even as all the multitude of the Israelites that are consumed), and let us send and see."

They took therefore two chariot horses; and the king sent after the host of the Syrians, saying, "Go and see."

And they went after them unto Jordan; and, lo, all the

way was full of garments and vessels, which the Syrians had cast away in their haste: and the messengers returned, and told the king. And the people went out, and spoiled the tents of the Syrians. So a measure of fine flour was sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel according to the word of the Lord. And the king appointed the lord on whose hand he leaned to have the charge of the gate: and the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died, as the man of God had said, who spake when the king came down to him.

2 KINGS vi. 24-33, vii. 1-17

9. "THIS IS JEZEBEL"

Elisha the prophet called one of the children of the prophets, and said unto him "Gird up thy loins, and take this box of oil in thine hand and go to Ramoth-gilead. When thou comest thither look out there Jehu, the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, and go in and make him arise from among his brethren, and carry him to an inner chamber. Then take the box of oil, and pour it on his head, and say, 'Thus saith the Lord, I have anointed thee king over Israel.' Then open the door and flee, and tarry not."

So the young man, even the young man the prophet, went to Ramoth-gilead. When he came, behold, the captains of the host were sitting; and he said, "I have an errand to thee, O captain."

"Unto which of all us?" said Jehu.

"To thee, O captain!" he said and he arose, and went into the house, and poured the oil on Jehu's head, and said, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, 'I have anointed thee king over the people of the Lord, even over Israel. Thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master, that I may avenge the blood of all the servants of the Lord, at the hand of

Jezebel, for the whole house of Ahab shall perish. I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah. And the dogs shall eat Jezebel in the portion of Jezreel, and there shall be none to bury her.' " And he opened the door and fled.

And Jehu came forth to the servants of his lord, and one said unto him, "Is all well? Wherefore came this mad fellow to thee?"

And he said unto them, "Ye know the man, and his communication."

"It is false. Tell us now."

And Jehu said, "Thus and thus spake he to me, saying, 'Thus saith the Lord, I have anointed thee king over Israel.' "

Then they hasted, and took every man his garment, and put it under him on the top of the stairs, and blew with trumpets, saying, "Jehu is king!" So Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi conspired against Joram. And Jehu said, "If it be your minds, then let none go forth nor escape out of the city to go to tell it in Jezreel." So Jehu rode in a chariot, and went to Jezreel; for Joram lay there, to be healed of the wounds which the Syrians had given him when he fought with Hazael king of Syria. And Ahaziah king of Judah was come down to see Joram; and there stood a watchman on the tower in Jezreel, and he spied the company of Jehu as he came, and said, "I see a company."

And Joram said, "Take an horseman and send to meet them, and let him say, 'Is it peace?'"

So there went one on horseback to meet him, and said, "Thus saith the king, 'Is it peace?'"

And Jehu said, "What hast thou to do with peace? Turn thee behind me."

And the watchman told, saying, "The messenger came to them, but he cometh not again."

Then Joram sent out a second on horseback, which came to them and said, "Thus saith the king, 'Is it peace?'"

"What hast thou to do with peace? Turn thee behind me."

And the watchman told, saying, "He came even unto them, and cometh not again; and the driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi, for he driveth furiously."

"Make ready," Joram said. And his chariot was made ready, and Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah went out, each in his chariot, against Jehu, and met him in the portion of Naboth the Jezreelite. And when Joram saw Jehu, he said, "Is it peace, Jehu?"

And Jehu answered, "What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many?" And Joram turned his hands, and fled, and said to Ahaziah, "There is treachery, O Ahaziah."

And Jehu drew a bow with his full strength, and smote Joram between his arms, and the arrow went out at his heart and he sank down in his chariot. Then said Jehu to Bidkar his captain, "Take up, and cast him in the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite; for remember how that when I and thou rode together after Ahab his father, the Lord laid this burden upon him. 'Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons,' saith the Lord; 'and I will requite thee in this plat,' saith the Lord. Now therefore take and cast him into the plat of ground according to the word of the Lord."

When Ahaziah the king of Judah saw this, he fled by the way of the garden house; and Jehu followed after him, and said, "Smite him also in the chariot." And they did so at the going up to Gur, which is by Ibleam: and he fled to Megiddo, and died there; and his servants carried him in a chariot to Jerusalem, and buried him in his sepulchre with his fathers in the city of David.

And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it;

and she painted her face, and tired her head, and looked out at a window. And as Jehu entered in at the gate, she said, "Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?"

He lifted up his face to the window, and said, "Who is on my side? Who?" And there looked out to him two or three eunuchs.

And he said, "Throw her down." So they threw her down; and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses; and he trode her under foot. And when he was come in, he did eat and drink, and said, "Go, see now this cursed woman, and bury her; for she is a king's daughter."

They went to bury her, but found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands. Wherefore they came again, and told him, and he said, "This is the word of the Lord, which he spake by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 'In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel. And the carcase of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel; so that they shall not say, This is Jezebel.'"

2 KINGS ix

10. ELISHA'S DEATH

Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died. And Joash the king of Israel came down unto him, and wept over his face, and said, "O my father, my father! the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!"

And Elisha said unto him, "Take bow and arrows," and he took unto him bow and arrows, "Put thine hand upon the bow." And he put his hand upon it; and Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands.

"Open the window eastward." And he opened it.

"Shoot." And he shot.

And Elisha said, "The arrow of the Lord's deliverance,

and the arrow of deliverance from Syria, for thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek, till thou have consumed them. Take the arrows." And the king of Israel took them.

"Smite upon the ground." And he smote twice and stayed.

The man of God was wroth with him, and said, "Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten till thou hadst consumed it, whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice."

And Elisha died, and they buried him. And the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year, and as they were burying a man, behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha; and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet.

2 KINGS xiii. 14-21

HEZEKIAH AND THE ASSYRIANS

IN the third year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, Hezekiah the son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign. Twenty and five years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that David his father did. He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it. He trusted in the Lord God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him. For he clave to the Lord, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the Lord commanded Moses. And the Lord was with him; and he prospered whithersoever he went forth; and he rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not. He smote the Philistines, even unto Gaza, and the borders thereof, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city.

And it came to pass in the fourth year of King Hezekiah, that Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria and besieged it, and at the end of three years they took it. And the king of Assyria did carry away Israel unto Assyria, and put them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes, because they obeyed not the voice of the Lord their God, but transgressed his covenant, and all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded, and would not hear them, nor do them.

Now in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah did Sennacherib king of Assyria come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them. And Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria to Lachish, saying, "I have

offended. Return from me. That which thou puttest on me will I bear."

And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah three hundred talents of silver, and thirty talents of gold. And Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasures of the king's house. At that time did Hezekiah cut off the gold from the doors of the temple of the Lord, and from the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria.

And the king of Assyria sent Tartan, and Rabsaris, and Rab-shakeh from Lachish to king Hezekiah with a great host against Jerusalem. And they went up and came to Jerusalem, and when they were come up, they came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which is in the high way of the fuller's field. And when they had called to the king, there came out to them Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder.

"Speak ye now to Hezekiah," said Rab-shakeh unto them, "Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, 'What confidence is this wherein thou trustest? Thou sayest (but they are but vain words), I have counsel and strength for the war. Now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me? Now, behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt, on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand and pierce it; so is Pharaoh king of Egypt unto all that trust on him. But if ye say unto me, We trust in the Lord our God, is not that he whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and hath said to Judah and Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem?' Now, therefore, I pray thee, give pledges to my lord the king of Assyria, and I will deliver thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them. How then wilt thou turn away the face of one

captain of the least of my master's servants, and put thy trust on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen? Am I now come up without the Lord against this place to destroy it? The Lord said to me, Go up against this land, and destroy it."

Then said Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, and Shebna, and Joah, unto Rab-shakeh, "Speak, I pray thee, to thy servants in the Syrian language, for we understand it; and talk not with us in the Jews' language in the ears of the people that are on the wall."

But Rab-shakeh said unto them, "Hath my master sent me to thy master, and to thee, to speak these words? Hath he not sent me to the men which sit on the wall?"

Then Rab-shakeh stood, and cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language and spake, saying, "Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria. Thus saith the king, 'Let not Hezekiah deceive you; for he shall not be able to deliver you out of his hand. Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord, saying, "The Lord will surely deliver us, and this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria." Hearken not to Hezekiah.' For thus saith the king of Assyria, 'Make an agreement with me by a present and come out to me, and then eat ye every man of his own vine, and every one of his fig tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his cistern, until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of oil, olive, and of honey, that ye may live, and not die. Hearken not unto Hezekiah when he persuadeth you, saying, "The Lord will deliver us." Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and of Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah? Have they delivered Samaria out of mine hand? Who are they among all the gods of the countries, that have delivered

their country out of mine hand, that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem out of mine hand?" "

But the people held their peace, and answered him not a word; for the king's commandment was, saying, "Answer him not."

Then came Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder, to Hezekiah, with their clothes rent, and told him the words of Rab-shakeh. And when king Hezekiah heard it he rent his clothes and covered himself with sack-cloth and went into the house of the Lord. And he sent Eliakim and Shebna and the elders of the priests covered with sack-cloth to Isaiah, the prophet, the son of Amoz, and they said unto him, "This day is a day of trouble and of rebuke and blasphemy, for the children are come to the birth and there is not strength to bring forth. It may be the Lord thy God will hear all the words of Rab-shakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God, and will reprove the words which the Lord thy God hath heard. Wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that are left."

And Hezekiah prayed before the Lord, "O Lord God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubim, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth. Lord, bow down thine ear, and hear; open, Lord, thine eyes, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib which hath sent him to reproach the living God. Of a truth, Lord, the kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands. And have cast their gods into the fire; for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone; therefore they have destroyed them. Now therefore, O Lord our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord God, even thou only."

Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, 'That which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard. This is the word that the Lord hath spoken concerning him; the virgin, the daughter of Zion, hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee. Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? And against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? Even against the Holy One of Israel. By thy messengers thou hast reproached the Lord, and hast said, "With the multitude of my chariots I am come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon, and will cut down the tall cedar trees thereof, and the choice fir trees thereof; and I will enter into the lodgings of his borders, and into the forest of his Carmel. I have digged and drunk strange waters, and with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of besieged places." Hast thou not heard long ago how I have done it, and of ancient times that I have formed it? Now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste fenced cities into ruinous heaps. Therefore their inhabitants were of small power; they were dismayed and confounded; they were as the grass of the field, and as the green herb, as the grass on the house-tops, and as corn blasted before it be grown up. But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me. Because thy rage against me and thy tumult is come up into mine ears, therefore I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.

"And this shall be a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such things as grow of themselves, and in the second year that which springeth of the same; and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruits thereof. And the remnant that is escaped of the house of

Judah shall yet again take root downward, and bear fruit upward. For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion. The zeal of the Lord of hosts shall do this.' Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning the king of Assyria, 'He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city,' saith the Lord, 'for I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.' "

And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred and fourscore and five thousand; and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned and dwelt at Nineveh.

2 KINGS xviii, xix. 1-4, 15-36

ESTHER

Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus (this is Ahasuerus which reigned from India even unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces) that in those days, when the king Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which was in Shushan the palace, in the third year of his reign, he made a feast unto all his princes and his servants. The power of Persia and Media, the nobles and princes of the provinces, being before him, he showed the riches of his glorious kingdom, and the honour of his excellent majesty many days, even an hundred and four score days. And when these days were expired, the king made a feast unto all the people that were present in Shushan the palace, both unto great and small, seven days, in the court of the garden of the king's palace, where were white, green, and blue hangings, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and pillars of marble. The beds were of gold and silver, upon a pavement of red, and blue, and white, and black marble. They gave them drink in vessels of gold (the vessels being diverse one from another) and royal wine in abundance, according to the state of the king. And the drinking was according to the law; none did compel; for so the king had appointed to all the officers of his house, that they should do according to every man's pleasure. Also Vashti the queen made a feast for the women in the royal house which belonged to king Ahasuerus.

On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, and Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, the seven chamberlains that served in the presence of Ahasuerus the king, to bring Vashti the queen before the king with the crown royal,

to show the people and the princes her beauty; for she was fair to look on. But the queen Vashti refused to come at the king's commandment by his chamberlains: therefore was the king very wroth, and his anger burned in him. Then the king said to the wise men, "What shall we do unto the queen Vashti according to the law, because she hath not performed the commandment of the king Ahasuerus by the chamberlains?"

And Memucan answered before the king and the princes, "Vashti the queen hath not done wrong to the king only, but also to all the princes, and to all the people that are in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus. For this deed of the queen shall come abroad unto all women, so that they shall despise their husbands in their eyes, when it shall be reported, 'The king Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be brought in before him, but she came not.' Likewise shall the ladies of Persia and Media say this day unto all the king's princes, which have heard of the deed of the queen. Thus shall there arise too much contempt and wrath. If it please the king, let there be a royal commandment from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes, that it be not altered, that Vashti come no more before king Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal estate unto another that is better than she. And when the king's decree which he shall make shall be published throughout all his empire (for it is great), all the wives shall give to their husbands honour, both to great and small."

And the saying pleased the king and the princes; and the king did according to the word of Memucan. He sent letters unto all the king's provinces, into every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language, that every man should bear rule in his own house; and that it should be published according to the language of every people.

After these things, when the wrath of king Ahasuerus was appeased, he remembered Vashti, and what she had done, and what was decreed against her. Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, "Let there be fair young virgins sought for the king. Let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather together all the fair young virgins unto Shushan the palace, to the house of the women, unto the custody of Hege, the king's chamberlain, keeper of women; and let their things for purification be given them. And let the maiden which pleaseth the king be queen instead of Vashti." And the thing pleased the king; and he did so.

Now in Shushan the palace, there was a certain Jew, whose name was Mordecai, who had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captivity which had been carried away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away. He brought up Hadassah, that is Esther, his uncle's daughter, for she had neither father nor mother; and the maid was fair and beautiful, whom Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, took for his own daughter.

So it came to pass, when the king's commandment and his decree was heard, and when many maidens were gathered together unto Shushan the palace to the custody of Hegai, that Esther was brought also unto the king's house, to the custody of Hegai, keeper of the women. And the maiden pleased him, and she obtained kindness of him; and he speedily gave her her things for purification, with such things as belonged to her, and seven maidens, which were meet to be given her, out of the king's house; and he changed her and her maids unto the best place of the house of the women. Esther had not showed her people nor her kindred, for Mordecai had charged her that she should not show it. And Mordecai walked every day before the court of the women's

house, to know how Esther did, and what should become of her.

Now when every maid's turn was come to go in to king Ahasuerus, after that she had been twelve months, whatsoever she desired was given her to go with her out of the house of the women unto the king's house. In the evening she went, and on the morrow she returned into the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz the king's chamberlain, which kept the concubines. She came in unto the king no more, except the king delighted in her, and that she were called by name.

Now when the turn of Esther was come to go in unto the king, she required nothing but what Hegai the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed. And Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her. So Esther was taken unto king Ahasuerus into his house royal, in the tenth month, in the seventh year of his reign. And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti. Then the king made a great feast unto all his princes and his servants, even Esther's feast; and he made a release to the provinces, and gave gifts, according to the state of the king.

When the virgins were gathered together the second time, Mordecai sat in the king's gate. Esther had not yet showed her kindred nor her people as Mordecai had charged her, for Esther did the commandment of Mordecai, like as when she was brought up with him. While Mordecai sat in the king's gate, two of the king's chamberlains, Bigthan and Teresh, of those which kept the door, were wroth, and sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus. And the thing was known to Mordecai, who told it unto Esther the queen; and Esther certified the king thereof in Mordecai's name. When inquisi-

tion was made of the matter, it was found out; therefore they were both hanged on a tree; and it was written in the book of the Chronicles before the king.

After these things did king Ahasuerus promote Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him. All the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, bowed, and reverenced Haman, for the king had so commanded concerning him; but Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence. Then the king's servants, which were in the king's gate, said unto Mordecai, "Why transgressest thou the king's commandment?"

Now it came to pass, when they spake daily unto him, and he hearkened not unto them, that they told Haman, to see whether Mordecai's matters would stand, for he had told them that he was a Jew. When Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was Haman full of wrath; and he thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone; for they had showed him the people of Mordecai; wherefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, even the people of Mordecai.

"There is a certain people scattered abroad," said Haman unto king Ahasuerus, "and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom. Their laws are diverse from all people, neither keep they the king's laws; therefore it is not the king's profit to suffer them. If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed; and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the hands of those that have the charge of the business, to bring it into the king's treasures."

The king took his ring from his hand and gave it unto Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews' enemy, and said:

"The silver is given to thee, the people also, to do with them as seemeth good to thee."

Then were the king's scribes called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and there was written according to all that Haman had commanded, unto the king's lieutenants, and to the governors that were over every province, and to the rulers of every people of every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language; in the name of king Ahasuerus was it written, and sealed with the king's ring. The letters were sent by posts into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, and to take the spoil of them for a prey. The copy of the writing, for a commandment to be given in every province, was published unto all people, that they should be ready against that day. The posts went out, being hastened by the king's commandment and the decree was given in Shushan the palace. And the king and Haman sat down to drink; but the city Shushan was perplexed.

When Mordecai perceived all that was done, Mordecai rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry; and came even before the king's gate: for none might enter into the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. And in every province, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing: and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

So Esther's maids and her chamberlains came and told it her. Then was the queen exceedingly grieved; and she sent raiment to clothe Mordecai, and to take away his sackcloth from him; but he received it not. Then called Esther for Hatach, one of the king's chamberlains whom he had appointed

to attend upon her, and gave a commandment to Mordecai, to know what it was, and why it was. Hatach went forth to Mordecai unto the street of the city, which was before the king's gate. And Mordecai told him of all that had happened unto him, and of the sum of the money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's treasuries for the Jews, to destroy them. Also he gave him the copy of the writing of the decree that was given at Shushan to destroy them, to show it unto Esther, and to declare it unto her, and to charge her that she should go in unto the king, to make supplication unto him and to make request before him for her people. And Hatach came and told Esther the words of Mordecai.

Again Esther spake unto Hatach, and gave him commandment unto Mordecai, "All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days." And they told to Mordecai Esther's words.

Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, "Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed. Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

Then Esther bade them return Mordecai this answer, "Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day. I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish." So Mordecai went his

way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him.

Now it came to pass on the third day, that Esther put on her royal apparel and stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house, and the king sat upon his royal throne, in the royal house, over against the gate of the house. And when the king saw Esther, the queen, standing in the court, she obtained favour in his sight, and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand. So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre.

Then said the king unto her, "What wilt thou, queen Esther? And what is thy request? It shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom."

"If it seem good unto the king," Esther answered, "let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him."

Then the king said, "Cause Haman to make haste, that he may do as Esther hath said."

So the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared. And the king said unto Esther at the banquet of wine, "What is thy petition, and it shall be granted thee. And what is thy request? Even to the half of the kingdom it shall be performed."

Then answered Esther, "My petition and my request is: If I have found favour in the sight of the king, and if it please the king to grant my petition, and to perform my request, let the king and Haman come to the banquet that I shall prepare for them, and I will do to-morrow as the king hath said."

Then went Haman forth that day joyful and with a glad heart; but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, that he stood not up, nor moved for him, he was full of indignation against Mordecai. Nevertheless, Haman refrained himself, and when he came home, he sent and called for his

friends, and Zeresh his wife. And Haman told them of the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and all the things wherein the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king. Haman said, moreover, "Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself; and to-morrow am I invited unto her also with the king. Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate."

Then said Zeresh his wife and all his friends unto him, "Let a gallows be made of fifty cubits high, and to-morrow speak thou unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon. Then go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet." And the thing pleased Haman; and he caused the gallows to be made.

On that night could not the king sleep; and he commanded to bring the book of records of the Chronicles; and they were read before the king. And it was found written, that Mordecai had told of Bighhana and Teresh, two of the king's chamberlains, the keepers of the door who sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus.

"What honour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this?" said the king.

"There is nothing done for him," said the king's servants that ministered unto him.

"Who is in the court?" said the king.

Now Haman was come into the outward court of the king's house, to speak unto the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him. And the king's servants said, "Behold, Haman standeth in the court."

"Let him come in," the king said.

So Haman came in, and the king said unto him, "What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour?"

Now Haman thought in his heart, "To whom would the king delight to do honour more than to myself?" and he answered the king, "For the man whom the king delighteth to honour, let the royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head. Let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man withal whom the king delighteth to honour, and bring him on horseback through the streets of the city, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour."

Then the king said, "Make haste and take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew, that sitteth at the king's gate. Let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken."

Then took Haman the apparel and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and brought him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaimed before him, "Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour." Mordecai came again to the king's gate, but Haman hasted to his house mourning and having his head covered. And Haman told Zeresh his wife and all his friends every thing that had befallen him.

Then said his wise men and Zeresh his wife unto him, "If Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews, before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him."

And while they were yet talking with him, came the king's chamberlains, and hasted to bring Haman unto the banquet that Esther had prepared. So the king and Haman came to banquet with Esther the queen.

And the king said again unto Esther on the second day, at the banquet of wine, "What is thy petition, queen Esther?

And it shall be granted thee. And what is thy request? And it shall be performed, even to the half of the kingdom."

Then Esther the queen answered, "If I have found favour in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request. For we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. But if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had held my tongue, although the enemy could not countervail the king's damage."

Then the king Ahasuerus answered unto Esther, "Who is he, and where is he that durst presume in his heart to do so?"

"The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman," said Esther.

Then Haman was afraid before the king and queen. And the king, arising from the banquet of wine in his wrath, went into the palace garden; and Haman stood up to make request for his life to Esther the queen, for he saw that there was evil determined against him by the king. Then the king returned out of the palace garden into the place of the banquet of wine; and Haman was fallen upon the bed whereon Esther was. Then said the king, "Will he force the queen also before me in the house?"

As the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face. And Harbonah, one of the chamberlains, said before the king, "Behold, also, the gallows, fifty cubits high, which Haman had made for Mordecai, who had spoken good for the king, standeth in the house of Haman."

Then the king said, "Hang him thereon." So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified.

On that day did the king Ahasuerus give the house of Haman, the Jews' enemy, unto Esther the queen; and Mordecai came before the king; for Esther had told what he was unto her. And the king took off his ring, which he had

taken from Haman, and gave it unto Mordecai. And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman.

Esther spake yet again before the king, and fell down at his feet and besought him with tears to put away the mischief of Haman the Agagite, and his device that he had devised against the Jews. Then the king held out the golden sceptre toward Esther. So Esther arose, and stood before the king, and said, "If it please the king, and if I have found favour in his sight, and the thing seem right before the king, and I be pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to reverse the letters devised by Haman, which he wrote to destroy the Jews, which are in all the king's provinces. For how can I endure to see the evil that shall come unto my people? Or how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?"

Then Ahasuerus said unto Esther and to Mordecai, "Behold, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and him they have hanged upon the gallows, because he laid his hand upon the Jews. Write ye also for the Jews, as it liketh you, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's ring; for the writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse."

Then were the king's scribes called at that time in the third month, on the three and twentieth day thereof; and it was written (according to all that Mordecai commanded) unto the Jews, and to the lieutenants, and the deputies and rulers of the provinces which are from India unto Ethiopia, an hundred twenty and seven provinces, unto every province according to the writing thereof, and unto every people after their language. And to the Jews according to their writing, and according to their language. He wrote in the king Ahasuerus' name, and sealed it with the king's ring; and sent letters by posts on horseback, and riders on mules, camels, and young dromedaries, wherein the king granted the Jews which were in every city to gather themselves together, and to stand for

their life, to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish, all the power of the people and province that would assault them, both little ones and women, and to take the spoil of them for a prey, upon one day, in all the provinces of king Ahasuerus, namely, upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar. The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province was published unto all people, and that the Jews should be ready against that day to avenge themselves on their enemies. So the posts that rode upon mules and camels went out, being hastened and pressed on by the king's commandment. And the decree was given at Shushan the palace. And Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, and with a great crown of gold, and with a garment of fine linen and purple: and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad.

The Jews had light and gladness, and joy, and honour, and in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them.

THE STORY OF JOB

THERE was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. There were born unto him seven sons and three daughters. His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she-asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east. And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters, to eat and to drink with them; and when the days of their feasting were gone about, Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, "It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts." Thus did Job continually.

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. And the Lord said unto Satan, "Whence comest thou?"

"From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it," answered Satan.

And the Lord said unto Satan, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?"

"Doth Job fear God for nought?" Satan answered. "Hast thou not made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face."

"Behold, all that he hath is in thy power," the Lord said

unto Satan, "only upon himself put not forth thine hand." So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.

There was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house, and there came a messenger unto Job, and said, "The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them, and the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee."

While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, "The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burnt up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee." While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, "The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee." While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, "Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house; and, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee."

Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, and said, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord. And the Lord said unto Satan, "From whence comest thou?"

"From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it."

And the Lord said unto Satan, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? And still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause."

And Satan answered, "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath he will give for his life; but put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face."

"Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life."

So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.

Then said his wife unto him, "Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God, and die."

But he said unto her, "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

Then the Lord turned the captivity of Job, and gave him twice as much as he had before. Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house, and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him, every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an ear-ring of gold.

So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning; for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she-asses. He had also seven sons and three daughters. And he

called the name of the first, Jemina; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Keren-happuch. And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren. After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons and his sons' sons, even four generations. So Job died, being old, and full of days.

JOB i, ii. 1-10, xlvi. 10-17

J E R E M I A H

I. THE ROLL

It came to pass in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, that this word came unto Jeremiah from the Lord saying, "Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day. It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin."

Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah; and Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the Lord, which he had spoken unto him, upon a roll of a book. Then Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, "I am shut up; I cannot go into the house of the Lord. Therefore go thou and read in the roll, which thou hast written from my mouth, the words of the Lord in the ears of the people, in the Lord's house upon the fasting day; and also thou shalt read them in the ears of all Judah that come out of their cities. It may be they will present their supplication before the Lord, and will return every one from his evil way, for great is the anger and the fury that the Lord hath pronounced against this people."

And Baruch did according to all that Jeremiah the prophet commanded him, reading in the book the words of the Lord in the Lord's house. And it came to pass in the fifth year of Jehoiakim, in the ninth month, that they proclaimed a fast before the Lord to all the people in Jerusalem, and to all the people that came from the cities of Judah unto Jerusalem. Then read Baruch in the book the words of Jeremiah in the

house of the Lord, in the chamber of Gemariah the son of Shaphan the scribe, in the higher court, at the entry of the new gate of the Lord's house, in the ears of all the people.

When Michaiah the son of Gemariah had heard out of the book all the words of the Lord, then he went down into the king's house, into the scribe's chamber, and, lo, all the princes sat there. Then Michaiah declared unto them all the words that he had heard, when Baruch read the book in the ears of the people. Therefore all the princes sent Jehudi the son of Nethaniah unto Baruch, saying, "Take in thine hand the roll wherein thou hast read in the ears of the people, and come." So Baruch took the roll in his hand, and came unto them.

"Sit down now," they said, "and read it in our ears." So Baruch read it in their ears.

Now it came to pass, when they had heard all the words, they were afraid, both one and other, and said unto Baruch, "We will surely tell the king of all these words. Tell us now, How didst thou write all these words at his mouth?"

"He pronounced all these words unto me with his mouth," Baruch answered, "and I wrote them with ink in the book."

Then said the princes unto Baruch, "Go, hide thee, thou and Jeremiah; and let no man know where ye be."

They went in to the king into the court, but they laid up the roll in the chamber of Elishama the scribe, and told all the words in the ears of the king. So the king sent Jehudi to fetch the roll; and he took it out of Elishama the scribe's chamber; and Jehudi read it in the ears of the king, and in the ears of all the princes which stood beside the king.

Now the king sat in the winter-house, in the ninth month, and there was a fire on the hearth burning before him. And when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, he cut it with the penknife, and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed. Yet they were not afraid, nor rent their garments, neither the king, nor any of his servants

that heard all these words. Nevertheless, Elnathan, and Delaiah, and Gemariah had made intercession to the king that he would not burn the roll; but he would not hear them, but commanded Jerahmeel and Seraiah and Shelemiah to take Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet. But the Lord hid them.

Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah (after that the king had burnt the roll, and the words which Baruch wrote at the mouth of Jeremiah), saying, "Take thee again another roll, and write in it all the former words that were in the first roll, which Jehoiakim the king of Judah hath burnt. And thou shalt say to Jehoiakim, 'Thus saith the Lord, Thou hast burnt this roll, saying, "Why hast thou written therein, saying, The king of Babylon shall certainly come and destroy this land, and shall cause to cease from thence man and beast?" Therefore thus saith the Lord, of Jehoiakim king of Judah, He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David; and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost. And I will punish him and his seed and his servants for their iniquity; and I will bring upon them, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and upon the men of Judah, all the evil that I have pronounced against them: but they hearken not.' "

Then took Jeremiah another roll, and gave it to Baruch the scribe, who wrote therein, from the mouth of Jeremiah, all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burnt in the fire; and there were added besides unto them many like words.

JEREMIAH XXXVI

2. THE DUNGEON

King Zedekiah the son of Josiah reigned instead of Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon

made king in the land of Judah. But neither he, nor his servants, nor the people of the land, did hearken unto the words of the Lord, which he spake by the prophet Jeremiah. And Zedekiah the king sent Jehucal and Zephaniah to the prophet Jeremiah, saying, "Pray now unto the Lord our God for us."

Now Jeremiah came in and went out among the people; for they had not put him into prison. Then Pharaoh's army was come forth out of Egypt; and when the Chaldeans that besieged Jerusalem heard tidings of them, they departed from Jerusalem.

Then came the word of the Lord unto the prophet Jeremiah, saying, "Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, thus shall ye say to the king of Judah, that sent you unto me to enquire of me, 'Behold, Pharaoh's army, which is come forth to help you, shall return to Egypt into their own land; and the Chaldeans shall come again, and fight against this city, and take it, and burn it with fire.' Thus saith the Lord, 'Deceive not yourselves, saying, The Chaldeans shall surely depart from us; for they shall not depart. For though ye had smitten the whole army of the Chaldeans that fight against you, and there remained but wounded men among them, yet should they rise up every man in his tent, and burn this city with fire.' "

And it came to pass, that when the army of the Chaldeans was broken up from Jerusalem for fear of Pharaoh's army, then Jeremiah went forth out of Jerusalem to go into the land of Benjamin, to separate himself thence in the midst of the people. And when he was in the gate of Benjamin, a captain of the ward was there, whose name was Irijah, and he took Jeremiah the prophet, saying, "Thou fallest away to the Chaldeans."

"It is false; I fall not away to the Chaldeans," said Jeremiah. But he hearkened not to him: so Irijah took Jeremiah and

brought him to the princes. Wherefore the princes were wroth with Jeremiah, and smote him, and put him in prison in the house of Jonathan the scribe, for they had made that the prison.

When Jeremiah was entered into the dungeon and into the cabins and had remained there many days, then Zedekiah the king sent, and took him out; and the king asked him secretly in his house, and said, "Is there any word from the Lord?"

And Jeremiah said, "There is. For, said he, thou shalt be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon." Moreover, Jeremiah said, "What have I offended against thee, or against thy servants, or against this people, that ye have put me in prison? Where are now your prophets which prophesied unto you, saying, 'The king of Babylon shall not come against you, nor against this land'? Therefore hear now, I pray thee, O my lord the king, let my supplication, I pray thee, be accepted before thee, that thou cause me not to return to the house of Jonathan the scribe, lest I die there."

Then Zedekiah commanded that they should commit Jeremiah into the court of the prison, and that they should give him daily a piece of bread out of the baker's street, until all the bread in the city were spent. Thus Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison.

Then Shephatiah, and Gedaliah, and Jucal, and Pashur heard the words that Jeremiah had spoken unto all the people, saying, "Thus saith the Lord, 'He that remaineth in this city shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence; but he that goeth forth to the Chaldeans shall live; for he shall have his life for a prey, and shall live.' " Thus saith the Lord, "This city shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which shall take it." Therefore the princes said unto the king, "We beseech thee, let this man be put to death; for thus he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, in

speaking such words unto them: for this man seeketh not the welfare of this people, but the hurt."

"Behold, he is in your hand," said Zedekiah, "for the king is not he that can do any thing against you."

Then took they Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the son of Hammelech, that was in the court of the prison: and they let down Jeremiah with cords; and in the dungeon there was no water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire. Now, when Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, one of the eunuchs which was in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon (the king then sitting in the gate of Benjamin), he went forth out of the king's house, and spake to the king, saying, "My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have cast into the dungeon; and he is like to die for hunger in the place where he is: for there is no more bread in the city."

Then the king commanded Ebed-melech, "Take from hence thirty men with thee, and take up Jeremiah the prophet out of the dungeon, before he die." So Ebed-melech took the men with him, and went into the house of the king under the treasury, and took thence old cast clouts and old rotten rags, and let them down by cords into the dungeon to Jeremiah. And Ebed-melech said unto Jeremiah, "Put now these old cast clouts and rotten rags under thine armholes under the cords." And Jeremiah did so. So they drew up Jeremiah with cords, and took him up out of the dungeon: and Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison.

Then Zedekiah the king sent, and took Jeremiah unto him into the third entry that is in the house of the Lord, and said, "I will ask thee a thing; hide nothing from me."

"If I declare it unto thee, wilt thou not surely put me to death? And if I give thee counsel, wilt thou not hearken unto me?" Jeremiah said.

So Zedekiah the king sware secretly unto Jeremiah, "As the Lord liveth, that made us this soul, I will not put thee to death, neither will I give thee into the hand of these men that seek thy life."

Then said Jeremiah, "Thus saith the Lord, the God of hosts, the God of Israel, 'If thou wilt assuredly go forth unto the king of Babylon's princes, then thy soul shall live, and this city shall not be burned with fire; and thou shalt live, and thine house. But if thou wilt not go forth to the king of Babylon's princes, then shall this city be given into the hand of the Chaldeans, and they shall burn it with fire, and thou shalt not escape out of their hand.'"

"I am afraid of the Jews that are fallen to the Chaldeans, lest they deliver me into their hand, and they mock me," Zedekiah said.

But Jeremiah said, "They shall not deliver thee. Obey, I beseech thee, the voice of the Lord, which I speak unto thee; so it shall be well unto thee, and thy soul shall live. But if thou refuse to go forth, this is the word that the Lord hath showed me; and, behold, all the women that are left in the king of Judah's house shall be brought forth to the king of Babylon's princes, and those women shall say, 'Thy friends have set thee on, and have prevailed against thee; thy feet are sunk in the mire, and they are turned away back. So they shall bring out all thy wives and thy children to the Chaldeans; and thou shalt not escape out of their hand, but shalt be taken by the hand of the king of Babylon; and thou shalt cause this city to be burnt with fire.'"

"Let no man know of these words, and thou shalt not die," said Zedekiah. "But if the princes hear that I have talked with thee, and they come unto thee, and say unto thee, 'Declare unto us now what thou hast said unto the king, hide it not from us, and we will not put thee to death, also what the king said unto thee.' Then thou shalt say unto them,

I presented my supplication before the king, that he would not cause me to return to Jonathan's house to die there.' "

Then came all the princes unto Jeremiah, and asked him: and he told them according to all these words that the king had commanded. So they left off speaking with him; for the natter was not perceived. So Jeremiah abode in the court of the prison until the day that Jerusalem was taken: and he was here when Jerusalem was taken.

JEREMIAH xxxvii, xxxviii

D A N I E L

1. THE DREAM

IN the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it, and the Lord gave Jehoiakim into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God, which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure-house of his god. And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, of the king's seed, and of the princes; children in whom was no blemish, but well-favoured, skilful in all wisdom, cunning in knowledge and understanding science, such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans. The king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank; so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king.

Now among these were, of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names; for he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abed-nego. But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank. Therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs. And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, "I fear my Lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink. Why should he see

your faces worse liking than the children which are of your sort? Then shall ye make me endanger my head to the king."

Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, "Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink. Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat; and as thou seest, deal with thy servants."

So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days. At the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat. Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink, and gave them pulse. As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; therefore stood they before the king. And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.

In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him. Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to show the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king, and the king said

unto them, "I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream."

Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriac, "O king, live for ever! Tell thy servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation."

The king answered, "The thing is gone from me. If ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill; but if ye show the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honour. Therefore show me the dream and the interpretation thereof."

"Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation of it," they answered.

"I know of certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me," said the king. "But if ye will not make known unto me the dream there is but one decree for you; for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can show me the interpretation thereof."

The Chaldeans answered before the king, "There is not a man upon the earth that can show the king's matter; therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean. It is a rare thing that the king requireth; and there is none other that can show it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh."

For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. The decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain. Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise

men of Babylon, and he said to Arioch the king's captain, "Why is the decree so hasty from the king?" Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel.

Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would show the king the interpretation. Daniel went to his house and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, that they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision, and Daniel blessed the God of heaven, and said, "Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever, for wisdom and might are his. He changeth the times and the seasons; he removeth kings, and setteth up kings; he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding. He revealeth the deep and secret things; he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him. I thank thee and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee; for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter."

Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise men of Babylon, and said, "Destroy not the wise men of Babylon. Bring me in before the king, and I will show unto the king the interpretation."

Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said, "I have found a man of the captives of Judah that will make known unto the king the interpretation."

"Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof?" said the king to Daniel.

"The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers,

show unto the king," Daniel answered. "But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these. As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed what should come to pass hereafter; and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass. But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart. Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee, and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

"This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given unto thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold. After thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.

And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron, forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things, and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. Whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potter's clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men; but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold, the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter; and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure."

Then the king, Nebuchadnezzar, fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him.

The king answered unto Daniel, "Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret." Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and the chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon. Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel sat in the gate of the king.

2. THE FIERY FURNACE

Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits, which he set up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

Then an herald cried aloud, "To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up, and whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace."

Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of music, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and accused the Jews, and they said to the king Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live for ever! Thou, O king, hast made a decree, that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the golden image, and whoso

falleth not down and worshippeth, that he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee; they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. Then they brought these men before the king, and Nebuchadnezzar said, "Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, do ye not serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up? Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made, well; but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?"

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego answered the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. Therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated. He commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. Then these men were bound in their coats, their hose, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the

burning fiery furnace. Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew these men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. And Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and said unto his counsellors, "Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?"

"True, O king," they answered.

"Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and said, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth and come hither."

Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came forth of the midst of the fire. And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.

Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god except their own God. Therefore I make a decree, that every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill; because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort." Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the province of Babylon.

3. BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST

Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand, and while he tasted the wine, he commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem, that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein. Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them. They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.

In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another. The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers, and he spake to the wise men of Babylon, "Whosoever shall read this writing, and show me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom."

Then came in all the king's wise men; but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof. Then was king Belshazzar greatly troubled, and his countenance was changed in him, and his lords were astonished.

Now the queen, by reason of the words of the king and his lords, came into the banquet house; and the queen spake, and said, "O king, live for ever! Let not thy thoughts trouble

thee, nor let thy countenance be changed. There is a man in thy kingdom in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father, light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father the king, I say, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers, forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and showing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king called Belteshazzar. Now let Daniel be called, and he will show the interpretation."

Then was Daniel brought before the king, and the king said, "Art thou that Daniel, which art of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry? I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee. And now the wise men, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing, and make known unto me the interpretation thereof, but they could not show the interpretation of the thing. I have heard of thee, that thou canst make interpretations and dissolve doubts; now if thou canst read this writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom."

Then Daniel answered the king, "Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another. Yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation. O thou king! the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom and majesty, and glory, and honour. And for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him. Whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive,

and whom he would he set up, and whom he would he put down. But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him, and he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses. They fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will.

“And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; but hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not nor hear, nor know; and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified. Then was the part of the hand set from him; and this writing was written. And this is the writing that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.”

Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom. In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about three score and two years old.

4. THE LIONS' DEN

It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom; and over these three presidents, of whom Daniel was first; that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage. This Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm. Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him. Then said these men, "We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God."

Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said, "King Darius, live for ever! All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not."

Wherefore King Darius signed the writing and the decree.

Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went in to his house; and, his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime. Then these men assembled, and found

Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. They came near, and spake before the king concerning the king's decree. "Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a petition of any god or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?"

"The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not," said the king.

Then answered they, "That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day."

Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him; and he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him. Then these men assembled unto the king, and said, "Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, that no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed."

Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake unto Daniel, "Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee."

And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel. Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting, neither were instruments of music brought before him, and his sleep went from him. The king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions, and when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?"

Then said Daniel, "O king, live for ever. My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me; forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt."

Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God. And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives, and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den. Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth; "Peace be multiplied unto you. I make a decree, that in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel; for he is the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end. He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions."

So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

DANIEL vi

5. SUSANNA AND THE ELDERS

There dwelt a man in Babylon, called Joacim; and he took a wife, whose name was Susanna, the daughter of Chelcias, a very fair woman, and one that feared the Lord. Her parents also were righteous, and taught their daughter according to the law of Moses.

Now Joacim was a great rich man, and had a fair garden joining unto his house: and to him resorted the Jews; because he was more honourable than all others. The same year were appointed two of the ancients of the people to be judges, such as the Lord spake of, that wickedness came from Babylon from ancient judges, who seemed to govern the people. These kept much at Joacim's house; and all that had any suits in law came unto them.

Now when the people departed away at noon, Susanna went into her husband's garden to walk. The two elders saw her going in every day, and walking; so that their lust was inflamed toward her. And they perverted their own mind, and turned away their eyes, that they might not look unto heaven, nor remember just judgments. Albeit they both were wounded with her love, yet durst not one shew another his grief, for they were ashamed to declare their lust, that they desired to have to do with her. Yet they watched diligently from day to day to see her.

And the one said to the other, "Let us now go home, for it is dinner time." So when they were gone out, they parted the one from the other, and turning back again they came to the same place; and after that they had asked one another the cause, they acknowledged their lust: then appointed they a time both together, when they might find her alone.

It fell out, as they watched a fit time, she went in as before with two maids only, and she was desirous to wash herself in the garden, for it was hot. And there was nobody there save the two elders, that had hid themselves, and watched her.

Then she said to her maids, "Bring me oil and washing balls, and shut the garden doors, that I may wash me." And they did as she bade them, and shut the garden doors, and went out themselves at privy doors to fetch the things that

she had commanded them, but they saw not the elders, because they were hid.

Now when the maids were gone forth, the two elders rose up, and ran unto her, saying, "Behold, the garden doors are shut, that no man can see us, and we are in love with thee; therefore consent unto us, and lie with us. If thou wilt not, we will bear witness against thee, that a young man was with thee, and therefore thou didst send away thy maids from thee."

Then Susanna sighed and said, "I am straitened on every side, for if I do this thing, it is death unto me; and if I do it not, I cannot escape your hands. It is better for me to fall into your hands, and not do it, than to sin in the sight of the Lord."

With that Susanna cried with a loud voice; and the two elders cried out against her. Then ran the one, and opened the garden door. So when the servants of the house heard the cry in the garden, they rushed in at a privy door, to see what was done unto her. But when the elders had declared their matter, the servants were greatly ashamed: for there was never such a report made of Susanna.

The next day, when the people were assembled to her husband Joacim, the two elders came also full of mischievous imagination against Susanna to put her to death; and said before the people, "Send for Susanna, the daughter of Chel-cias, Joacim's wife." So they sent and she came with her father, and mother, her children, and all her kindred. Now Susanna was a very delicate woman, and beauteous to behold. And these wicked men commanded to uncover her face (for she was covered), that they might be filled with her beauty. Therefore her friends and all that saw her wept. Then the two elders stood up in the midst of the people, and laid their hands upon her head. And she weeping, looked up toward heaven; for her heart trusted in the Lord. And the

elders said, "As we walked in the garden alone, this woman came in with two maids, and shut the garden doors, and sent the maids away. Then a young man, who there was hid, came unto her, and lay with her. Then we that stood in a corner of the garden, seeing this wickedness, ran unto them. And when we saw them together, the man we could not hold, for he was stronger than we, and opened the door, and leaped out. But having taken this woman, we asked who the young man was, but she would not tell us. These things do we testify."

Then the assembly believed them, as those that were the elders and judges of the people: so they condemned her to death.

Then Susanna cried out with a loud voice, "O everlasting God, that knowest the secrets, and knowest all things before they be, thou knowest that they have borne false witness against me, and, behold, I must die; whereas I never did such things as these men have maliciously invented against me."

And the Lord heard her voice. Therefore when she was led to be put to death, the Lord raised up the holy spirit of a young youth, whose name was Daniel, who cried with a loud voice, "I am clear from the blood of this woman." Then all the people turned them toward him, and said, "What mean these words that thou hast spoken?"

So he standing in the midst of them said, "Are ye such fools, ye sons of Israel, that without examination or knowledge of the truth ye have condemned a daughter of Israel? Return again to the place of judgment, for they have borne false witness against her."

Therefore all the people turned again in haste, and the elders said unto him, "Come, sit down among us, and shew it us, seeing God hath given thee the honour of an elder."

Then said Daniel, "Put these two aside one far from

another, and I will examine them." So when they were put asunder one from another, he called one of them, and said unto him, "O thou that art waxen old in wickedness, now thy sins which thou hast committed aforetime are come to light, for thou hast pronounced false judgment, and hast condemned the innocent, and hast let the guilty go free; albeit the Lord saith, The innocent and righteous shalt thou not slay. Now then, if thou hast seen her, tell me, under what tree sawest thou them companying together?"

"Under a mastick tree," the elder answered.

"Very well," Daniel said. "Thou hast lied against thine own head: for even now the angel of God hath received the sentence of God to cut thee in two."

So he put him aside, and commanded to bring the other, and said unto him, "O thou seed of Chanaan, and not of Juda, beauty hath deceived thee, and lust hath perverted thine heart. Thus have ye dealt with the daughters of Israel, and they for fear companied with you, but the daughter of Juda would not abide your wickedness. Now therefore tell me, under what tree didst thou take them companying together?"

"Under an holm tree," the elder answered.

Then said Daniel unto him, "Well. Thou hast also lied against thine own head, for the angel of God waiteth with the sword to cut thee in two, that he may destroy you."

With that all the assembly cried out with a loud voice, and praised God, who saveth them that trust in him. And they arose against the two elders, for Daniel had convicted them of false witness by their own mouth; and according to the law of Moses they did unto them in such sort as they maliciously intended to do to their neighbour, and they put them to death. Thus the innocent blood was saved the same day.

6. BEL AND THE DRAGON

King Astyages was gathered to his fathers, and Cyrus of Persia received his kingdom; and Daniel conversed with the king, and was honoured above all his friends.

Now the Babylonians had an idol called Bel, and there were spent upon him every day twelve great measures of fine flour, and forty sheep, and six vessels of wine. The king worshipped it, and went daily to adore it, but Daniel worshipped his own God. And the king said unto him, "Why dost not thou worship Bel?"

"Because I may not worship idols made with hands, but the living God, who hath created the heaven and the earth, and hath sovereignty over all flesh," Daniel answered.

Then said the king, "Thinkest thou not that Bel is a living god? Seest thou not how much he eateth and drinketh every day?"

Then Daniel smiled, and said, "O king, be not deceived; for this is but clay within, and brass without, and did never eat or drink any thing."

So the king was wroth, and called for his priests, and said unto them, "If ye tell me not who this is that devoureth these expences, ye shall die. But if ye can certify me that Bel devoureth them, then Daniel shall die, for he hath spoken blasphemy against Bel."

And Daniel said unto the king, "Let it be according to thy word." Now the priests of Bel were threescore and ten, besides their wives and children. And the king went with Daniel into the temple of Bel.

So Bel's priests said, "Lo, we go out; but thou, O king, set on the meat, and make ready the wine, and shut the door fast, and seal it with thine own signet. And to-morrow when thou comest in, if thou findest not that Bel hath eaten up all,

we will suffer death, or else Daniel, that speaketh falsely against us." They little regarded it; for under the table they had made a privy entrance, whereby they entered in continually, and consumed those things.

So when they were gone forth, the king set meats before Bel. Now Daniel had commanded his servants to bring ashes, and those they strewed throughout all the temple in the presence of the king alone. Then went they out, and shut the door, and sealed it with the king's signet, and so departed. Now in the night came the priests with their wives and children, as they were wont to do, and did eat and drink up all.

In the morning betime the king arose, and Daniel with him. And the king said, "Daniel, are the seals whole?"

"Yea, O king, they be whole."

And as soon as he had opened the door, the king looked upon the table, and cried with a loud voice, "Great art thou, O Bel, and with thee is no deceit at all."

Then laughed Daniel, and held the king, that he should not go in, and said, "Behold now the pavement, and mark well whose footsteps are these."

The king said, "I see the footsteps of men, women, and children." Then the king was angry, and took the priests with their wives and children, who shewed him the privy doors, where they came in, and consumed such things as were upon the table. Therefore the king slew them, and delivered Bel into Daniel's power, who destroyed him and his temple.

In that same place there was a great dragon, which they of Babylon worshipped. And the king said unto Daniel, "Wilt thou also say that this is of brass? Lo, he liveth, he eateth and drinketh; thou canst not say that he is no living god. Therefore worship him."

"I will worship the Lord my God, for he is the living

God. But give me leave, O king, and I shall slay this dragon without sword or staff," said Daniel.

"I give thee leave," the king said.

Then Daniel took pitch, and fat and hair, and did seethe them together, and made lumps thereof. This he put in the dragon's mouth, and so the dragon burst in sunder, and Daniel said, "Lo, these are the gods ye worship."

APOCRYPHA: BEL AND THE DRAGON, to verse 27

JONAH

THE word of the Lord came unto Jonah the son of Amittai saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it, for their wickedness is come up before me." But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish, from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. But the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken. Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship, and he lay, and was fast asleep.

So the shipmaster came to him, and said, "What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not." And the mariners said every one to his fellow "Come, and let us cast lots that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us."

So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah. Then said they, "Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil is upon us? What is thine occupation? And whence comest thou? What is thy country? And of what people art thou?"

"I am an Hebrew," he said, "and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven which hath made the sea and the dry land."

Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said, "Why hast thou done this?" For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them. Then said they, "What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us?" For the sea wrought and was tempestuous.

"Take me up," said Jonah "and cast me forth into the

sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you, for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you."

Nevertheless, the men rowed hard to bring the ship to the land; but they could not, for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them. Wherefore they cried unto the Lord, "We beseech thee, O Lord, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood, for thou, O Lord, hast done as it pleased thee." So they took up Jonah and cast him forth into the sea; and the sea ceased from her raging. Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the Lord, and made vows.

Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly, and said,

I called by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord,
And he answered me;
Out of the belly of hell cried I,
And thou heardest my voice.
For thou didst cast me into the depth, in the heart of the
seas,
And the flood was round about me;
All thy waves and thy billows passed over me.
And I said, I am cast out from before thine eyes;
Yet I will look again toward thy holy temple.
The waters compassed me about, even to the soul;
The deep was round about me;
The weeds were wrapped about my head.
I went down to the bottoms of the mountains;
The earth with her bars closed upon me for ever:
Yet hast thou brought up my life from the pit, O Lord
my God.
When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord:

And my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple.
They that regard lying vanities
Forsake their own mercy.

But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving;
I will pay that which I have vowed.
Salvation is of the Lord.

And the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land; and the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time, saying, "Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee."

So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey. Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, "Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; let them not feed nor drink water. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God; yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?"

And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not. But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry. And he prayed unto the Lord, "I pray thee, O Lord, was not this my saying

when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish; for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil. Therefore now, O Lord, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live."

Then said the Lord, "Doest thou well to be angry?"

So Jonah went out of the city, and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth, and sat under it in the shadow, till he might see what would become of the city. And the Lord God prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief. So Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd. But God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered. And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, "It is better for me to die than to live."

God said unto Jonah, "Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd?"

And he said, "I do well to be angry, even unto death."

Then said the Lord, "Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in the night, and perished in a night. And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?"

TOBIAS AND THE ANGEL

I

I, Tobit, have walked all the days of my life in the way of truth and justice, and I did many alms-deeds to my brethren, and my nation, who came with me to Nineveh, into the land of the Assyrians.

When I was in mine own country, in the land of Israel, being but young, all the tribe of Nephthali, my father fell from the house of Jerusalem, which was chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, that all the tribes should sacrifice there, where the temple of the habitation of the most High was consecrated and built for all ages. Now all the tribes which together revolted, and the house of my father Nephthali, sacrificed unto the heifer Baal. But I alone went often to Jerusalem at the feasts, as it was ordained unto all the people of Israel by an everlasting decree, having the firstfruits and tenths of increase, with that which was first shorn; and them gave I at the altar to the priests the children of Aaron. The first tenth part of all increase I gave to the sons of Aaron, who ministered at Jerusalem; another tenth part I sold away, and went, and spent it every year at Jerusalem; and the third I gave unto them to whom it was meet, as Debora my father's mother had commanded me, because I was left an orphan by my father.

Furthermore, when I was come to the age of a man, I married Anna of mine own kindred, and of her I begat Tobias. And when we were carried away captives to Nineveh, all my brethren and those that were of my kindred did eat of the bread of the Gentiles, but I kept myself from eating; because I remembered God with all my heart. And the most High gave me grace and favour before Enemessar, so that I

was his purveyor. I went into Media, and left in trust with Gabael, the brother of Gabrias, at Rages, a city of Media, ten talents of silver. Now when Enemessar was dead, Sennacherib his son reigned in his stead; whose estate was troubled that I could not go into Media.

In the time of Enemessar I gave many alms to my brethren and gave my bread to the hungry, and my clothes to the naked; and if I saw any of my nation dead, or cast about the walls of Nineveh, I buried him. If the king Sennacherib had slain any, when he was come, and fled from Judea, I buried them privily; for in his wrath he killed many; but the bodies were not found when they were sought for of the king. And when one of the Ninevites went and complained of me to the king, that I buried them, and hid myself, understanding that I was sought for to be put to death, I withdrew myself for fear. Then all my goods were forcibly taken away, neither was there anything left me, beside my wife Anna and my son Tobias.

There passed not five and fifty days, before two of his sons killed Sennacherib and they fled into the mountains of Ararath, and Sarchedonus his son reigned in his stead, who appointed over his father's accounts, and over all his affairs, Achiacharus my brother Anael's son. And Achiacharus intreating for me, I returned to Nineveh. Now Achiacharus was cupbearer, and keeper of the signet, and steward, and overseer of the accounts, and Sarchedonus appointed him next unto him; and he was my brother's son.

Now when I was come home again, and my wife Anna was restored unto me, with my son Tobias, in the feast of Pentecost, there was a good dinner prepared me, in the which I sat down to eat. And when I saw abundance of meat, I said to my son, "Go and bring what poor man soever thou shalt find out of our brethren who is mindful of the Lord; and, lo, I tarry for thee."

But he came again, and said, "Father, one of our nation is strangled and is cast out in the market-place."

Then before I had tasted of any meat, I started up, and took him up into a room until the going down of the sun. Then I returned, and washed myself, and ate my meat in heaviness, remembering that prophecy of Amos, as he said,

"Your feasts shall be turned into mourning
And all your mirth into lamentation."

Therefore I wept; and after the going down of the sun I went and made a grave, and buried him. But my neighbours mocked me, and said, "This man is not yet afraid to be put to death for this matter, who fled away; and yet, lo, he burieth the dead again."

The same night also I returned from the burial, and slept by the wall of my courtyard, being polluted, and my face uncovered. I knew not that there were sparrows in the wall, and mine eyes being open, the sparrows muted warm dung into mine eyes; and a whiteness came in mine eyes. I went to the physicians, but they helped me not; moreover Achiarus did nourish me, until I went into Elymais. And my wife Anna did take women's works to do. When she had sent the work home to the owners, they paid her wages, and gave her also besides a kid. But when it came to my house, and began to cry, I said unto her, "From whence is this kid? Is it not stolen? Render it to the owners; for it is not lawful to eat anything that is stolen."

But she said, "It was given for a gift more than the wages." Howbeit I did not believe her; but bade her render it to the owners and I was abashed at her.

"Where are thine alms and thy righteous deeds?" she replied. "Behold, thou and all thy works are known."

Then I being grieved, did weep, and in my sorrow, prayed,

saying, O Lord, thou art just, and all thy works and all thy ways are mercy and truth, and thou judgest truly and justly for ever. Remember me, and look on me, punish me not for my sins and ignorance, and the sins of my fathers, who have sinned before thee. They obeyed not thy commandments, whereupon thou hast delivered us for a spoil, and unto captivity, and unto death and for a proverb of reproach to all the nations among whom we are dispersed. And now thy judgments are many and true; deal with me according to my sins and my father's, because we have not kept thy commandments, neither have walked in truth before thee. Now therefore deal with me as seemeth best unto thee, and command my spirit to be taken from me, that I may be dissolved, and become earth; for it is profitable for me to die rather than to live, because I have heard false reproaches, and have much sorrow. Command therefore that I may now be delivered out of this distress, and go into the everlasting place. Turn not thy face away from me.

2

It came to pass the same day, that in Ecbatane, a city of Media, Sara the daughter of Raguel was also reproached by her father's maids, because she had been married to seven husbands, whom Asmodeus the evil spirit had killed before they had lain with her.

"Dost thou not know," said they, "that thou hast strangled thine husbands? Thou hast had already seven husbands, neither wast thou named after any of them. Wherefore dost thou beat us for them? If they be dead, go thy ways after them, let us never see of thee either son or daughter."

When she heard these things, she was very sorrowful, so that she thought to have strangled herself; but she said, "I am the only daughter of my father, and if I do this, it

shall be a reproach unto him, and I shall bring his old age with sorrow unto the grave."

Then she prayed toward the window, and said, "Blessed art thou, O Lord my God, and thine holy and glorious name is blessed and honourable for ever; let all thy works praise thee for ever. And now, O Lord, I set mine eyes and my face toward thee, and say, 'Take me out of the earth, that I may hear no more the reproach.' Thou knowest, Lord, that I am pure from all sin with man, and that I never polluted my name, nor the name of my father, in the land of my captivity. I am the only daughter of my father, neither hath he another child to be his heir, neither any near kinsman, nor any son of his alive, to whom I may keep myself for a wife. My seven husbands are already dead; and why should I live? But if I please not thee that I should die, command some regard to be had of me, and pity taken of me, that I hear no more reproach."

So the prayers of them both were heard before the majesty of the great God; and Raphael was sent to heal them both, that is to scale away the whiteness of Tobit's eyes, and to give Sara the daughter of Raguel for a wife to Tobias the son of Tobit; and to bind Asmodeus the evil spirit; because Sara belonged to Tobias by right of inheritance. The self-same time came Tobit home, and entered into his house, and Sara the daughter of Raguel came down from her upper chamber.

In that day Tobit remembered the money which he had committed to Gabael in Rages of Media, and said with himself, "I have wished for death; wherefore do I not call for my son Tobias, that I may signify to him of the money before I die?"

When he had called him, he said, "My son, when I am dead, bury me; and despise not thy mother, but honour her all the days of thy life, and do that which shall please her, and grieve her not. Remember, my son, that she saw many dangers for thee, when thou wast in her womb; and when she is dead, bury her by me in one grave. My son, be mindful of the Lord our God all thy days, and let not thy will be set to sin, or to transgress his commandments. Do uprightly all thy life long, and follow not the ways of unrighteousness. If thou deal truly, thy doings shall prosperously succeed to thee, and to all them that live justly. Give alms of thy substance; and when thou givest alms, let not thine eye be envious, neither turn thy face from any poor, and the face of God shall not be turned away from thee. If thou hast abundance, give alms accordingly; if thou have but a little, be not afraid to give according to that little, for thou layest up a good treasure for thyself against the day of necessity, because alms do deliver from death, and suffereth not to come into darkness, for alms is a good gift unto all that give it in the sight of the most High.

"Beware of all whoredom, my son, and chiefly take a wife of the seed of thy fathers, and take not a strange woman to wife, which is not of thy father's tribe, for we are the children of the prophets, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Remember, my son, that our fathers from the beginning, even that they all married wives of their own kindred, and were blessed in their children, and their seed shall inherit the land. Now therefore, my son, love thy brethren, and despise not in thy heart thy brethren, the sons and daughters of thy people, in not taking a wife of them; for in pride is destruction and much trouble, and in lewdness is decay and great want; for lewdness is the mother of famine. Let not the wages of any man, which hath wrought for thee, tarry with thee, but give him it out of hand; for if thou serve God, he will also repay

thee. Be circumspect, my son, in all things thou doest, and be wise in all thy conversation. Do that to no man which thou hatest; drink not wine to make thee drunken, neither let drunkenness go with thee in thy journey. Give of thy bread to the hungry, and of thy garments to them that are naked; and according to thine abundance give alms; and let not thine eye be envious when thou givest alms. Pour out thy bread on the burial of the just, but give nothing to the wicked. Ask counsel of all that are wise, and despise not any counsel that is profitable.

“Bless the Lord thy God always, and desire of him that thy ways may be directed, and that all thy paths and counsels shall prosper, for every nation hath not counsel; but the Lord himself giveth all good things, and he humbleth whom he will, as he will. Now therefore, my son, remember my commandments, neither let them be put out of thy mind.

“And now I signify this to thee, that I committed ten talents to Gabael the son of Gabrias at Rages in Media. And fear not, my son, that we are made poor, for thou hast much wealth, if thou fear God, and depart from all sin, and do that which is pleasing in his sight.”

Tobias answered, “Father, I will do all things which thou hast commanded me. But how can I receive the money, seeing I know him not?” Then Tobit gave him the handwriting, and said, “Seek thee a man which may go with thee, while I yet live, and I will give him wages; and go and receive the money.”

Therefore Tobias went to seek a man, and found Raphael that was an angel. But he knew it not: and he said unto him, “Canst thou go with me to Rages? And knowest thou those places well?”

“I will go with thee,” said the angel, “and I know the way well, for I have lodged with our brother Gabael.”

“Tarry for me till I tell my father,” said Tobias.

"Go, and tarry not," said the angel.

So Tobias went in and said to his father, "Behold, I have found one which will go with me."

"Call him unto me, that I may know of what tribe he is, and whether he is a trusty man to go with thee." So Tobias called him, and Raphael came in, and they saluted one another.

"Brother, shew me of what tribe and family thou art," said Tobias.

To whom Raphael said, "Dost thou seek for a tribe or family, or an hired man to go with thy son?"

"I would know, brother, thy kindred and name," said Tobit.

"I am Azarias, the son of Ananias the great, and of thy brethren."

"Thou art welcome, brother. Be not now angry with me, because I have enquired to know thy tribe and thy family; for thou art my brother, of an honest and good stock. I know Ananias and Jonathas, sons of that great Samaias, as we went together to Jerusalem to worship, and offered the firstborn, and the tenths of the fruits; and they were not seduced with the error of our brethren. My brother, thou art of a good stock. But tell me, what wages shall I give thee? Wilt thou a drachm a day, and things necessary, as to mine own son? Yea, moreover, if ye return safe, I will add something to thy wages." So they were well pleased.

Then said Tobit to Tobias, "Prepare thyself for the journey, and God send you a good journey." And when his son had prepared all things for the journey, his father said, "Go thou with this man, and God, which dwelleth in heaven, prosper your journey, and the angel of God keep you company." So they went forth both, and the young man's dog with them.

But Anna his mother wept, and said to Tobit, "Why

hast thou sent away our son? Is he not the staff of our hand in going in and out before us? Be not greedy to add more to money; but let it be as refuse in respect of our child, for that which the Lord hath given us to live with doth suffice us."

"Take no care, my sister," said Tobit, "he shall return in safety, and thine eyes shall see him. For the good angel will keep him company, and his journey shall be prosperous and he shall return safe." Then she made an end of weeping

Now as they went on their journey, they came in the evening to the river Tigris, and they lodged there. And when the young man went down to wash himself, a fish leaped out of the river, and would have devoured him.

Then the angel said unto him, "Take the fish." And the young man laid hold of the fish, and drew it to land.

"Open the fish," said the angel, "and take the heart and the liver and the gall, and put them up safely." So the young man did as the angel commanded him; and when they had roasted the fish, they did eat it; and they both went on their way, till they drew near to Ecbatane.

Then the young man said unto the angel, "Brother Azarias, to what use is the heart and the liver and the gall of the fish?"

"Touching the heart and the liver," said Azarias, "if a devil or an evil spirit trouble any, we may make a smoke thereof before the man or the woman, and the party shall be no more vexed. As for the gall, it is good to anoint a man that hath whiteness in his eyes, and he shall be healed."

When they were come near to Rages, the angel said to the young man, "Brother, to-day we shall lodge with Raguel,

who is thy cousin, and he hath one only daughter, named Sara; I will speak for her, that she may be given thee for a wife, for to thee doth the right of her appertain, seeing thou only art of her kindred. The maid is fair and wise; now therefore hear me, and I will speak to her father; and when we return from Rages we will celebrate the marriage: for I know that Raguel cannot marry her to another according to the law of Moses, but he shall be guilty of death, because the right of inheritance doth rather appertain to thee than to any other."

Then the young man answered the angel, "I have heard, brother Azarias, that this maid hath been given to seven men, who all died in the marriage chamber. And now I am the only son of my father, and I am afraid, lest if I go in unto her, I die, as the others before; for a wicked spirit loveth her, which hurteth nobody but those which come unto her; wherefore I also fear lest I die, and bring my father's and my mother's life because of me to the grave with sorrow, for they have no other son to bury them."

"Dost thou not remember," said the angel, "the precepts which thy father gave thee, that thou shouldest marry a wife of thine own kindred? Wherefore hear me, O my brother; for she shall be given thee to wife; and make thou no reckoning of the evil spirit; for this same night shall she be given thee in marriage. When thou shalt come into the marriage chamber thou shalt take the ashes of perfume, and shalt lay upon them some of the heart and liver of the fish, and shalt make a smoke with it. The devil shall smell it, and flee away, and never come again any more; but when thou shalt come to her, rise up both of you, and pray to God which is merciful, who will have pity on you, and save you. Fear not, for she is appointed unto thee from the beginning; and thou shalt preserve her, and she shall go with thee. Moreover, I suppose that she shall bear thee children."

Now when Tobias had heard these things, he loved her and his heart was effectually joined to her.

When they were come to Ecbatane, they came to the house of Raguel, and Sara met them: and after they had saluted one another, she brought them into the house.

"How like is this young man to Tobit my cousin!" said Raguel to Edna his wife. And Raguel asked them, "From whence are ye, brethren?"

"We are of the sons of Nephthalim, which are captives in Nineveh."

"Do ye know Tobit our kinsman?"

"We know him."

"Is he in good health?"

"He is both alive, and in good health."

And Tobias said, "He is my father."

Then Raguel leaped up, and kissed him, and wept, and blessed him, and said, "Thou art the son of an honest and good man." But when he heard that Tobit was blind he was sorrowful and wept. And likewise Edna his wife and Sara his daughter wept.

They entertained them cheerfully; and after they had killed a ram of the flock, and they set store of meat on the table. Then said Tobias to Raphael, "Brother Azarias, speak of those things of which thou didst talk in the way, and let this business be dispatched."

So Raphael communicated the matter with Raguel; and Raguel said to Tobias, "Eat and drink and make merry, for it is meet that thou shouldest marry my daughter. Nevertheless, I will declare unto thee the truth. I have given my daughter in marriage to seven men, who died that night they came in unto her; nevertheless for the present be merry."

But Tobias said, "I will eat nothing here till we agree and swear one to another."

"Then take her from henceforth according to the manner, for thou art her cousin, and she is thine, and the merciful God give you good success in all things," Raguel said. Then he called his daughter Sara, and she came to her father, and he took her by the hand, and gave her to be wife to Tobias, saying, "Behold, take her after the law of Moses, and lead her away to thy father." And he blessed them; and called Edna his wife, and took paper, and did write an instrument of covenants, and sealed it. Then they began to eat. And Raguel called his wife Edna, and said unto her, "Sister, prepare another chamber, and bring her in thither." Which when she had done as he had bidden her, she brought Sara thither: and she wept, and she received the tears of her daughter, and said unto her, "Be of good comfort, my daughter; the Lord of heaven and earth give thee joy for this thy sorrow. Be of good comfort, my daughter."

When they had supped, they brought Tobias in unto her. And as he went, he remembered the words of Raphael, and took the ashes of the perfumes, and put the heart and the liver of the fish thereupon, and made a smoke therewith, the which smell when the evil spirit had smelled, he fled into the utmost parts of Egypt, and the angel bound him.

And after that they were both shut in together, Tobias rose out of the bed, and said,

"Sister, arise, and let us pray that God would have pity on us." Then began Tobias to say, "Blessed art thou, O God of our fathers, and blessed is thy holy and glorious name for ever; let the heavens bless thee, and all thy creatures. Thou madest Adam, and gavest him Eve his wife for an helper and stay. Of them came mankind. Thou hast said, It is not good that man should be alone; let us make unto him an aid like unto himself. And now, O Lord, I take not this my sister for lust, but uprightly: therefore mercifully ordain that we may become aged together."

And she said with him, "Amen." So they slept both that night.

And Raguel arose, and went and made a grave, saying, "I fear lest he also be dead." But when Raguel was come into his house, he said unto his wife Edna, "Send one of the maids, and let her see whether he be alive; if he be not, that we may bury him, and no man know it." So the maid opened the door, and went in, and found them both asleep. And came forth, and told them that he was alive.

Then Raguel praised God and said, "O God, thou art worthy to be praised with all pure and holy praise; therefore let thy saints praise thee with all thy creatures; and let all thine angels and thine elect praise thee for ever. Thou art to be praised, for thou hast made me joyful; and that is not come to me which I suspected; but thou hast dealt with us according to thy great mercy. Thou art to be praised, because thou hast had mercy of two that were the only begotten children of their fathers; grant them mercy, O Lord, and finish their life in health with joy and mercy."

Then Raguel bade his servants to fill the grave, and he kept the wedding feast fourteen days. For before the days of the marriage were finished, Raguel had said unto him by an oath, that he should not depart till the fourteen days of the marriage were expired; and then he should take the half of his goods, and go in safety to his father; and should have the rest "when I and my wife be dead."

Then Tobias called Raphael, and said, "Brother Azarias, take with thee a servant, and two camels, and go to Rages of Media to Gabael, and bring me the money, and bring him to the wedding. For Raguel hath sworn that I shall not depart, but my father counteth the days; and if I tarry long, he will be very sorry."

So Raphael went out, and lodged with Gabael, and gave him the handwriting: who brought forth two bags which

were sealed up, and gave them to him. And early in the morning they went forth both together, and came to the wedding; and Tobias blessed his wife.

5

Now Tobit his father counted every day; and when the days of the journey were expired, and they came not, then Tobit said, "Are they detained? Or is Gabael dead, and there is no man to give him the money?" Therefore he was very sorry.

Then his wife said unto him, "My son is dead, seeing he stayeth long." And she began to bewail, "Now I care for nothing, my son, since I have let thee go, the light of mine eyes."

"Hold thy peace," said Tobit, "take no care, for he is safe."

But she said, "Hold thy peace, and deceive me not; my son is dead." And she went out every day into the way which they went, and did eat no meat on the day time, and ceased not whole nights to bewail her son Tobias, until the fourteen days of the wedding were expired, which Raguel had sworn he should spend there. Then Tobias said to Raguel, "Let me go, for my father and my mother look no more to see me."

But his father-in-law said, "Tarry with me, and I will send to thy father, and they shall declare unto him how things go with thee."

"No," said Tobias, "let me go to my father."

Then Raguel arose, and gave him Sara his wife, and half his goods, servants, and cattle, and money. And he blessed them, and sent them away, saying, "The God of heaven give you a prosperous journey, my children." And he said to his daughter, "Honour thy father and thy mother-in-law,

which are now thy parents, that I may hear good report of thee." And he kissed her.

Edna also said to Tobias, "The Lord of heaven restore thee, my dear brother, and grant that I may see thy children of my daughter Sara before I die, that I may rejoice before the Lord. Behold, I commit my daughter unto thee of special trust; wherefore do not entreat her evil."

After these things Tobias went his way, praising God that he had given him a prosperous journey, and blessed Raguel and Edna his wife, and went on his way till they drew near unto Nineveh. Then Raphael said to Tobias, "Thou knowest, brother, how thou didst leave thy father. Let us haste before thy wife, and prepare the house, and take in thine hand the gall of the fish." So they went their way and the dog went after them.

Now Anna sat looking about towards the way of her son, and when she espied him coming, she said to his father, "Behold, thy son cometh, and the man that went with him."

Then said Raphael, "I know, Tobias, that thy father will open his eyes. Therefore anoint thou his eyes with the gall, and being pricked therewith he shall rub, and the whiteness shall fall away, and he shall see thee."

Then Anna ran forth, and fell upon the neck of her son, and said, "Seeing I have seen thee, my son, from henceforth I am content to die."

And they wept both. Tobit also went forth toward the door, and stumbled, but his son ran unto him, and took hold of his father, and he strake of the gall on his father's eyes, saying, "Be of good hope, my father." And when his eyes began to smart, Tobit rubbed them; and the whiteness pilled away from the corners of his eyes; and when he saw his son, he fell upon his neck. And he wept and said, "Blessed art thou, O God, and blessed is thy name for ever; and blessed

are all thine holy angels, for thou hast scourged, and hast taken pity on me; for, behold, I see my son Tobias."

And his son went in rejoicing, and told his father the great things that had happened to him in Media. Then Tobit went out to meet his daughter-in-law at the gate of Nineveh, rejoicing, and praising God; and they which saw him go marvelled, because he had received his sight. But Tobit gave thanks before them, because God had mercy on him. And when he came near to Sara his daughter-in-law, he blessed her, saying, "Thou art welcome, daughter. God be blessed, which hath brought thee unto us, and blessed be thy father and thy mother."

And there was joy among all his brethren which were at Nineveh. And Achiarus, and Nasbas his brother's son, came; and Tobias' wedding was kept seven days with great joy.

6

Then Tobit called his son Tobias, and said, "My son, see that the man have his wages, which went with thee, and thou must give him more."

"O father," said Tobias, "it is no harm to me to give him half of those things which I have brought; for he hath brought me again to thee in safety, and made whole my wife, and brought me the money, and likewise healed thee."

"It is due unto him," said the old man. So he called the angel, and said, "Take half of all that ye have brought, and go in safety."

Then Raphael took them both apart, and said, "Bless God, praise him, and magnify him, and praise him for the things which he hath done unto you in the sight of all that live. It is good to praise God, and exalt his name, and honourably to show forth the words of God; therefore be not slack to praise him. It is good to keep close the secret of a king, but it is

honourable to reveal the works of God. Do that which is good and no evil shall touch you. Prayer is good with fasting and alms and righteousness. A little with righteousness is better than much with unrighteousness. It is better to give alms than to lay up gold. For alms doth deliver from death, and shall purge away all sin. Those that exercise alms and righteousness shall be filled with life; but they that sin are enemies to their own life. Surely I will keep close nothing from you, for I said, 'It was good to keep close the secret of a king, but that it was honourable to reveal the works of God.' Now, therefore, when thou didst pray, and Sara thy daughter-in-law, I did bring the remembrance of your prayers before the Holy One: and when thou didst bury the dead, I was with thee likewise; and when thou didst not delay to rise up, and leave thy dinner, to go and cover the dead, thy good deed was not hid from me, but I was with thee. And now God hath sent me to heal thee and Sara thy daughter-in-law.

"I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, which present the prayers of the saints, and which go in and out before the glory of the Holy One."

Then they were both troubled, and fell upon their faces, for they feared.

But he said, "Fear not, for it shall go well with you; praise God therefore. Not of any favour of mine, but by the will of our God I came; wherefore praise him for ever. All these days I did appear unto you: but I did neither eat nor drink, but ye did see a vision. Now therefore give God thanks; for I go up to him that sent me; but write all things which are done in a book."

And when they arose they saw him no more. Then they confessed the great and wonderful works of God, and how the angel of the Lord had appeared unto them.

J U D I T H

I

IN the twelfth year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, who reigned over the Assyrians in Nineveh, the great city; in the days of Arphaxad, which reigned over the Medes in Ecbatane, and built at Ecbatane and round about it walls of stones hewn three cubits broad and six cubits long, and made the height of the wall seventy cubits, and the breadth thereof fifty cubits, and set the towers thereof upon the gates of it, an hundred cubits high, and the breath thereof in the foundation three score cubits, and made the gates thereof, even gates that were raised to the height of seventy cubits, and the breadth of them was forty cubits, for the going forth of his mighty armies, and for the setting in array of his footmen, even in those days King Nebuchadnezzar made war with king Arphaxad in the great plain, which is the plain in the borders of Ragau. And there came unto him all they that dwelt in the hill country, and all that dwelt by Euphrates, and Tigris, and Hydaspes, and the plain of Arioch the king of the Elymeans, and very many nations of the sons of Chelod, assembled themselves to the battle.

Then Nebuchadnezzar king of the Assyrians sent unto all that dwelt in Persia, and to all that dwelt westward, and to all that dwelt upon the sea coast, and to those among the nations that were of Carmel, and Galaad, and the higher Galilee, and the great plain of Esdrelom, and to all that were in Samaria and the cities thereof, and beyond Jordan and Jerusalem, and the river of Egypt, and all the land of Goshen.

But all the inhabitants of the land made light of the commandment of Nebuchadnezzar king of the Assyrians, neither went they with him to the battle, for they were not afraid

of him: yea, he was before them as one man, and they sent away his ambassadors from them without effect, and with disgrace. Therefore Nebuchadnezzar was very angry with all this country, and sware by his throne and kingdom that he would surely be avenged upon all those coasts of Cilicia, and Damascus, and Syria, and that he would slay with the sword all the inhabitants of the land of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and all Judea, and all that were in Egypt.

Then he marched in battle array with his power against king Arphaxad in the seventeenth year, and he prevailed in his battle; for he overthrew all the power of Arphaxad, and all his horsemen, and all his chariots, and became lord of his cities, and came unto Ecbatane, and took the towers, and spoiled the streets thereof, and turned the beauty thereof into shame. He took also Arphaxad in the mountains of Ragau, and smote him through with his darts, and destroyed him utterly that day. So he returned afterward to Nineveh, both he and all his company of sundry nations, being a very great multitude of men of war, and there he took his ease, and banqueted, both he and his army, an hundred and twenty days.

In the eighteenth year, the two and twentieth day of the first month, there was talk in the house of Nebuchadnezzar king of the Assyrians that he should, as he said, avenge himself on all the earth. So he called unto him all his officers, and all his nobles, and communicated with them his secret counsel, and concluded the afflicting of the whole earth out of his own mouth; and they decreed to destroy all flesh that did not obey the commandment of his mouth.

And when he had ended his counsel, Nebuchadnezzar

called Holofernes the chief captain of his army, which was next unto him, and said unto him,

“Thus saith the great king, the lord of the whole earth, Behold, thou shalt go forth from my presence, and take with thee men that trust in their own strength, of footmen an hundred and twenty thousand; and the number of horses with their riders twelve thousand, and thou shalt go against all the west country, because they disobeyed my commandment. And thou shalt declare unto them, that they prepare for me earth and water; for I will go forth in my wrath against them, and will cover the whole face of the earth with the feet of mine army, and I will give them for a spoil unto them, so that their slain shall fill their valleys and brooks, and the river shall be filled with their dead, till it overflow; and I will lead them captives to the utmost parts of all the earth. Thou therefore shalt go forth, and take beforehand for me all their coasts; and if they will yield themselves unto thee, thou shalt reserve them for me till the day of their punishment. But concerning them that rebel, let not thine eye spare them, but put them to the slaughter, and spoil them wheresoever thou goest. For as I live, and by the power of my kingdom, whatsoever I have spoken, that will I do by mine hand. And take thou heed that thou transgress none of the commandments of thy lord, but accomplish them fully, as I have commanded thee, and defer not to do them.”

Then Holofernes went forth from the presence of his lord, and called all the governors and captains and the officers of the army of Assur. He mustered the chosen men for the battle, as his lord had commanded him, unto an hundred and twenty thousand, and twelve thousand archers on horseback, and he ranged them, as a great army is ordered for the war. He took camels and asses for their baggage, a very great number; and sheep and oxen and goats without number for their provision; and plenty of victual for every man of the army,

and very much gold and silver out of the king's house. And he went forth and all his power on their journey, to go before king Nebuchadnezzar, and to cover all the face of the earth westward with their chariots, and horsemen, and their chosen footmen. A great number also of sundry countries came with them like locusts, and like the sand of the earth, for the multitude was without number. And they went forth of Nineveh three days' journey towards the plain of Bectileth, and pitched from Bectileth near the mountain which is at the left hand of the upper Cilicia.

Then he took all his army, his footmen, and horsemen, and chariots, and went from thence into the hill country; and destroyed Phud and Lud, and spoiled all the children of Rasses, and the children of Ismael, which were toward the wilderness at the south of the land of the Chellians; and he went over Euphrates, and went through Mesopotamia, and destroyed all the high cities that were upon the river Arbonai till ye come to the sea. He took the borders of Cilicia, and killed all that resisted him, and came to the borders of Japheth, which were toward the south, over against Arabia. He compassed also all the children of Madian, and burned up their tabernacles, and spoiled their shepcotes. Then he went down into the plain of Damascus in the time of wheat harvest, and burnt up all their fields, and destroyed their flocks and herds, also he spoiled their cities, and utterly wasted their countries, and smote all their young men with the edge of the sword.

Therefore the fear and dread of him fell upon all inhabitants of the sea coasts, which were in Sidon and Tyre, and they that dwelt in Azotus and Ascalon feared him greatly. So they sent ambassadors unto him to treat of peace, saying,

"Behold we, the servants of Nebuchadnezzar the great king, lie before thee; use us as shall be good in thy sight. Behold,

our houses, and all our places, and all our fields of wheat, and flocks and herds, and all the lodges of our tents, lie before thy face; use them as it pleaseth thee. Behold, even our cities and the inhabitants thereof are thy servants; come and deal with them as seemeth good unto thee."

So the men came to Holofernes, and declared unto him after this manner. Then came he down toward the sea coast, both he and his army, and set garrisons in the high cities, and took out of them chosen men for allies. So they and all the country round about received them with garlands, with dances, and with timbrels. Yet he did cast down their frontiers, and cut down their groves; for he had decreed to destroy all the gods of the land, and all nations should worship Nebuchadnezzar only, and that all tongues and tribes should call upon him as god. Also he came over against Esdraelon near unto Judea, over against the great strait of Judea. And he pitched between Geba and Scythopolis, and there he tarried a whole month, that he might gather together all the baggage of his army.

3

Now the children of Israel, that dwelt in Judea, heard all that Holofernes had done to the nations, and after what manner he had spoiled all their temples, and brought them to nought. Therefore they were exceedingly afraid of him, and were troubled for Jerusalem, and for the temple of the Lord their God, for they were newly returned from the captivity, and all the people of Judea were lately gathered together; and the vessels, and the altar, and the house, were sanctified after the profanation.

Therefore they sent into all the coasts of Samaria, and the villages, and to the valley of Salem; and possessed themselves beforehand of all the tops of the high mountains, and

fortified the villages that were in them, and laid up victuals for the provision of war, for their fields were of late reaped. And Joacim the high priest, which was in those days in Jerusalem, wrote to them that dwelt in Bethulia, and Betomestham, which is over against Esdraelon toward the open country, near to Dothaim, charging them to keep the passages of the hill country; for by them there was an entrance into Judea, and it was easy to stop them that would come up, because the passage was strait for two men at the most. And the children of Israel did as Joacim the high priest had commanded them, with ancients of all the people of Israel which dwelt at Jerusalem.

Then every man of Israel cried to God with great fervency, and with great vehemency did they humble their souls. Both they, and their wives, and their children, and their cattle, and every stranger and hireling, and their servants bought with money, put sackcloth upon their loins. Thus every man and woman, and the little children, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, fell before the temple, and cast ashes upon their heads, and spread out their sackcloth before the face of the Lord, also they put sackcloth about the altar, and cried to the God of Israel all with one consent earnestly that he would not give their children for a prey, and their wives for a spoil, and the cities of their inheritance to destruction, and the sanctuary to profanation and reproach, and for the nations to rejoice at.

So God heard their prayers, and looked upon their afflictions; for the people fasted many days in all Judea and Jerusalem before the sanctuary of the Lord Almighty. And Joacim the high priest, and all the priests that stood before the Lord, and they which ministered unto the Lord, had their loins girt with sackcloth, and offered the daily burni offerings, with the vows and free gifts of the people, and had ashes on their mitres, and cried unto the Lord with all their

power, that he would look upon all the house of Israel graciously.

Then it was declared to Holofernes, the chief captain of the army of Assur, that the children of Israel had prepared for war, and had shut up the passages of the hill country, and had fortified all the tops of the high hills, and had laid impediments in the champaign countries; wherewith he was very angry, and called all the princes of Moab, and the captains of Ammon, and all the governors of the sea coast, and said unto them, "Tell me now, ye sons of Chanaan, who this people is, that dwelleth in the hill country, and what are the cities that they inhabit, and what is the multitude of their army, and wherein is their power and strength, and what king is set over them to be captain of their army? And why have they determined not to come and meet me, more than all the inhabitants of the west?"

Then said Achior, the captain of all the sons of Ammon, "Let my lord now hear a word from the mouth of thy servant, and I will declare unto thee the truth concerning this people, which dwelleth near thee, and inhabiteth the hill countries, and there shall no lie come out of the mouth of thy servant. This people are descended of the Chaldeans. They sojourned heretofore in Mesopotamia, because they would not follow the gods of their fathers which were in the land of Chaldea; for they left the way of their ancestors, and worshipped the God of heaven, the God whom they knew; so they cast them out from the face of their gods, and they fled into Mesopotamia, and sojourned there many days. Then their God commanded them to depart from the place where they sojourned, and to go into the land of Canaan, where they dwelt, and were increased with gold and silver, and with very much cattle. But when a famine covered all the land of Canaan,

they went down into Egypt, and sojourned there while they were nourished, and became there a great multitude, so that one could not number their nations. Therefore the king of Egypt rose up against them, dealt subtilly with them, and brought them low with labouring in brick, and made them slaves. Then they cried unto their God, and he smote all the land of Egypt with incurable plagues, so the Egyptians cast them out of their sight. And God dried the red sea before them, and brought them to mount Sinai and Cades-Barne, and cast forth all that dwelt in the wilderness. So they dwelt in the land of the Amorites, and they destroyed by their strength all them at Heshbon, and passing over Jordan they possessed all the hill country. Whilst they sinned not before their God, they prospered, because the God that hateth iniquity was with them. But when they departed from the way which he appointed them, they were destroyed in many battles very sore, and were led captives into a land that was not theirs, and the temple of their God was cast to the ground, and their cities were taken by their enemies. But now are they returned to their God, and are come up from the places where they were scattered, and have possessed Jerusalem, where their sanctuary is, and are seated in the hill country; for it was desolate.

“Now, therefore, my lord and governor, if there be any error in this people, and they sin against their God, let us consider that this shall be their ruin, and let us go up, and we shall overcome them. But if there be no iniquity in their nation, let my lord now pass by, lest their Lord defend them, and their God be for them, and we become a reproach before all the world.”

When Achior had finished these sayings, all the people standing round about the tent murmured, and the chief men of Holofernes, and all that dwelt by the sea side, and in Moab, spake that he should kill him.

"For," say they, "we will not be afraid of the face of the children of Israel; for, lo, it is a people that have no strength nor power for a strong battle. Now, therefore, lord Holofernes, we will go up, and they shall be a prey to be devoured of all thine army."

When the tumult of men that were about the council was ceased, Holofernes said unto Achior and all the Moabites before all the company of other nations, "Who art thou, Achior, and the hirelings of Ephraim, that thou hast prophesied among us as to-day, and hast said that we should not make war with the people of Israel, because their God will defend them? And who is God but Nebuchadnezzar? He will send his power, and will destroy them from the face of the earth, and their God shall not deliver them; but we his servants will destroy them as one man; for they are not able to sustain the power of our horses, for with them we will tread them under foot, and their mountains shall be drunken with their blood, and their fields shall be filled with their dead bodies, and their footsteps shall not be able to stand before us, for they shall utterly perish, saith king Nebuchadnezzar, lord of all the earth; for he said, 'None of my words shall be in vain.' And thou, Achior, an hireling of Ammon, which hast spoken these words in the day of thine iniquity, shalt see my face no more from this day, until I take vengeance of this nation that came out of Egypt. And then shall the sword of mine army, and the multitudes of them that serve me, pass through thy sides, and thou shalt fall among their slain, when I return. Now therefore my servants shall bring thee back into the hill country, and shall set thee in one of the cities of the passages, and thou shalt not perish till thou be destroyed with them. And if thou persuade thyself in thy mind that they shall not be taken, let not thy countenance fall; I have spoken it, and none of my words shall be in vain."

Then Holofernes commanded his servants that waited in his tent to take Achior, and bring him to Bethulia, and deliver him into the hands of the children of Israel. So his servants took Achior and brought him out of the camp into the plain, and they went from the midst of the plain into the hill country, and came unto the fountains that were under Bethulia. And when the men of the city saw them, they took up their weapons, and went out of the city to the top of the hill; and every man that used a sling kept them from coming up by casting of stones against them. Nevertheless, having gotten privily under the hill, they bound Achior, and cast him down, and left him at the foot of the hill, and returned to their lord.

But the Israelites descended from their city, and came unto him, and loosed him, and brought him into Bethulia, and presented him to the governors of the city, which were in those days Ozias the son of Micha and Charmis the son of Melchiel. They called together all the ancients of the city, and all their youth ran together, and their women, to the assembly, and they set Achior in the midst of all their people. Then Ozias asked him of that which was done, and he answered and declared unto them the words of the council of Holofernes and all the words that he had spoken in the midst of the princes of Assur, and whatsoever Holofernes had spoken proudly against the house of Israel.

Then the people fell down and worshipped God, and cried, saying, "O Lord God of heaven, behold their pride, and pity the low estate of our nation, and look upon the face of those that are sanctified unto thee this day." And they comforted Achior, and praised him greatly, and Ozias took him out of the assembly unto his house, and made a feast to the elders; and they called on the God of Israel all that night for help.

The next day Holofernes commanded all his army, and all his people which were come to take his part, that they should remove their camp against Bethulia, to take aforehand the ascents of the hill country, and to make war against the children of Israel. Their strong men removed their camps in that day, and the army of the men of war was an hundred and seventy thousand horsemen, besides the baggage, and other men that were afoot, among them a very great multitude. And they camped in the valley near unto Bethulia, by the fountain, and they spread themselves in breadth over Dothaim even to Belmain, and in length from Bethulia unto Cyamon, which is over against Esraelom.

Now the children of Israel, when they saw the multitude of them, were greatly troubled, and said every one to his neighbour, "Now will these men lick up the face of the earth; for neither the high mountains, nor the valleys, nor the hills, are able to bear their weight."

Then every man took up his weapons of war, and when they had kindled fires upon their towers, they remained and watched all that night. But on the second day Holofernes brought forth all his horsemen in the sight of the children of Israel which were in Bethulia, and viewed the passages up to the city, and came to the fountains of their waters, and took them, and set garrisons of men of war over them, and he himself removed toward his people.

Then came unto him all the chief of the children of Esau, and all the governors of the people of Moab, and the captains of the sea coast, and said,

"Let our lord now hear a word, that there be not an overthrow in thine army, for this people of the children of Israel do not trust in their spears, but in the height of the mountains

wherein they dwell, because it is not easy to come up to the tops of their mountains. Now, therefore, my lord, fight not against them in battle array, and there shall not so much as one man of thy people perish. Remain in thy camp, and keep all the men of thine army, and let thy servants get into their hands the fountain of water which issueth forth of the foot of the mountain; for all the inhabitants of Bethulia have their water thence; so shall thirst kill them, and they shall give up their city. We and our people shall go up to the tops of the mountains that are near, and will camp upon them, to watch that none go out of the city. So they and their wives and their children shall be consumed with famine, and before the sword come against them they shall be overthrown in the streets where they dwell. Thus shalt thou render them an evil reward; because they rebelled, and met not thy person peaceably."

These words pleased Holofernes and all his servants, and he appointed to do as they had spoken. So the camp of the children of Ammon departed, and with them five thousand of the Assyrians, and they pitched in the valley, and took the waters and the fountains of the waters of the children of Israel. The children of Esau went up with the children of Ammon, and camped in the hill country over against Dothaim; and they sent some of them toward the south, and toward the east, over against Ekrebel; and the rest of the army of the Assyrians camped in the plain, and covered the face of the whole land; and their tents and baggage were pitched to a very great multitude.

Then the children of Israel cried unto the Lord their God, because their heart failed, for all their enemies had compassed them round about, and there was no way to escape out from among them. Thus all the company of Assur remained about them, both their footmen, chariots, and horsemen, four and thirty days, so that all their vessels of water failed all the

inhabitants of Bethulia. And the cisterns were emptied, and they had not water to drink their fill for one day; for they gave them drink by measure. Therefore their young children were out of heart, and their women and young men fainted for thirst, and fell down in the streets of the city and by the passages of the gates, and there was no longer any strength in them. Then all the people assembled to Ozias, and to the chief of the city, both young men, and women, and children, and cried with a loud voice, and said before all the elders,

“God be judge between us and you, for ye have done us great injury, in that ye have not required peace of the children of Assur. For now we have no helper. God hath sold us into their hands, that we should be thrown down before them with thirst and great destruction. Therefore call them unto you, and deliver the whole city for a spoil to the people of Holofernes, and to all his army, for it is better for us to be made a spoil unto them than to die for thirst; for we will be his servants, that our souls may live, and not see the death of our infants before our eyes, nor our wives nor our children to die. We take to witness against you the heaven and the earth, and our God and Lord of our fathers, which punisheth us according to our sins and the sins of our fathers, that he do not according as we have said this day.”

Then there was great weeping with one consent in the midst of the assembly; and they cried unto the Lord God with a loud voice.

Then said Ozias to them, “Brethren, be of good courage, let us yet endure five days, in the which space the Lord our God may turn his mercy toward us; for he will not forsake us utterly; but if these days pass, and there come no help unto us, I will do according to your word.” And he dispersed the people every one to their own charge; and they went unto the walls and towers of their city, and sent the women

and children into their houses, and they were very low brought in the city.

Now Judith was the daughter of Merari, and Manasses was her husband, of her tribe and kindred, who died in the barley harvest. For as he stood overseeing them that bound sheaves in the field, the heat came upon his head, and he fell on his bed, and died in the city of Bethulia. So Judith was a widow in her house three years and four months. She made her a tent upon the top of her house, and put on sackcloth upon her loins, and ware her widow's apparel. She fasted all the days of her widowhood save the eves of the sabbaths, and the sabbaths, and the eves of the new moons, and the new moons and the feasts and solemn days of the house of Israel. She was also of a goodly countenance, and very beautiful to behold; and her husband Manasses had left her gold, and silver, and menservants, and maidservants, and cattle, and lands; and she remained upon them. And there was none that gave her an ill word, for she feared God greatly.

Now when she heard the evil words of the people against the governor, that they fainted for lack of water (for Judith had heard all the words that Ozias had spoken unto them, and that he had sworn to deliver the city unto the Assyrians after five days), she sent her waiting-woman, that had the government of all things that she had, to call Ozias and Chabris and Charmis, the ancients of the city. And they came unto her, and she said, "Hear me now, O ye governors of the inhabitants of Bethulia! Your words that ye have spoken before the people this day are not right, touching this oath which ye made and pronounced between God and you, and have promised to deliver the city to our enemies, unless within these days the Lord turn to help you. Who are ye that have tempted God

this day, and stand instead of God among the children of men? And now try the Lord Almighty, but ye shall never know any thing. For ye cannot find the depth of the heart of man, neither can ye perceive the things that he thinketh; then how can ye search out God, that hath made all these things and know his mind, or comprehend his purpose? Nay, my brethren, provoke not the Lord our God to anger. For if he will not help us within these five days, he hath power to defend us when he will, even every day, or to destroy us before our enemies.

“Do not bind the counsels of the Lord our God, for God is not as man, that he may be threatened; neither is he as the son of man, that he should be wavering. Therefore let us wait for salvation of him, and call upon him to help us, and he will hear our voice, if it please him. For there arose none in our age, neither is there any now in these days, neither tribe, nor family, nor people, nor city, among us which worship gods made with hands, as hath been aforetime. For the which cause our fathers were given to the sword, and for a spoil, and had a great fall before our enemies. But we know none other god, therefore we trust that he will not despise us, nor any of our nation. Now, therefore, O brethren, let us show an example to our brethren, because their hearts depend upon us; and the sanctuary, and the house, and the altar, rest upon us. Moreover, let us give thanks to the Lord our God, which trieth us, even as he did our fathers.”

Then said Ozias to her, “All that thou hast spoken hast thou spoken with a good heart, and there is none that may gainsay thy words. This is not the first day wherein thy wisdom is manifested, but from the beginning of thy days all the people have known thy understanding, because the disposition of thine heart is good. But the people were very thirsty, and compelled us to do unto them as we have spoken, and to bring an oath upon ourselves which we will not break.

Therefore now pray thou for us, because thou art a godly woman, and the Lord will send us rain to fill our cisterns, and we shall faint no more."

Then said Judith, "Hear me, and I will do a thing which shall go throughout all generations to the children of our nation. Ye shall stand this night in the gate, and I will go forth with my waiting-woman, and within the days ye have promised to deliver the city to our enemies the Lord shall visit Israel by mine hand. But enquire not ye of mine act, for I will not declare it unto you till the things be finished that I do."

Then said Ozias and the princes, "Go in peace, and the Lord God be before thee, to take vengeance on our enemies." So they returned from the tent, and went to their wards.

Then Judith fell upon her face, and put ashes upon her head, and uncovered the sackcloth wherewith she was clothed; and about the time that the incense of that evening was offered in Jerusalem in the house of the Lord, Judith cried with a loud voice, and said,

"O Lord God of my father Simeon, to whom thou gavest a sword to take vengeance of the strangers who loosened the girdle of a maid to defile her, and discovered the thigh to her shame, and polluted her virginity to her reproach; for thou saidst, 'It shall not be so'; and yet they did so, wherefore thou gavest their rulers to be slain, so that they dyed their bed in blood, being deceived, and smotest the servants with their lords, and the lords upon their thrones; and hast given their wives for a prey, and their daughters to be captives, and all their spoils to be divided among thy dear children, which were moved with thy zeal, and abhorred the pollution of their blood, and called upon thee for aid. O God, O my God, hear me also a widow! For thou hast wrought not only those things, but also the things which fell out before, and which

ensued after; thou hast thought upon the things which are now, and which are to come. Yea, what things thou didst determine were ready at hand, and said, Lo, we are here; for all thy ways are prepared, and thy judgments are in thy foreknowledge.

"Behold, the Assyrians are multiplied in their power; they are exalted with horse and man; they glory in the strength of their footmen; they trust in shield, and spear, and bow, and sling; and know not that thou art the Lord that breakest the battles. The Lord is thy name. Throw down their strength in thy power, and bring down their force in thy wrath: for they have purposed to defile thy sanctuary, and to pollute the tabernacle where thy glorious name resteth, and to cast down with sword the horn of thy altar. Behold their pride, and send thy wrath upon their heads; give into mine hand, which am a widow, the power that I have conceived. Smite by the deceit of my lips the servant with the prince, and the prince with the servant. Break down their stateliness by the hand of a woman. For thy power standeth not in multitude, nor thy might in strong men: for thou art a God of the afflicted, an helper of the oppressed, an upholder of the weak, a protector of the forlorn, a saviour of them that are without hope.

"I pray thee, I pray thee, O God of my father, and God of the inheritance of Israel, Lord of the heavens and earth, Creator of the waters, King of every creature, hear thou my prayer. Make my speech and deceit to be their wound and stripe, who have purposed cruel things against thy covenant, and thy hallowed house, and against the top of Sion, and against the house of the possession of thy children. And make every nation and tribe to acknowledge that thou art the God of all power and might, and that there is none other that protecteth the people of Israel but thou."

After that she had ceased to cry unto the God of Israel,

and had made an end of all these words, she rose where she had fallen down, and called her maid, and went down into the house in the which she abode in the sabbath days and in her feast days. She pulled off the sackcloth which she had on, and put off the garments of her widowhood, and washed her body all over with water, and anointed herself with precious ointment, and braided the hair of her head, and put a tire upon it, and put on her garments of gladness, wherewith she was clad during the life of Manasses her husband. She took sandals upon her feet, and put about her her bracelets, and her chains, and her rings, and her ear-rings, and all her ornaments, and decked herself bravely, to allure the eyes of all men that should see her. Then she gave her maid a bottle of wine, and a cruse of oil, and filled a bag with parched corn, and lumps of figs, and fine bread; so she folded all these things together, and laid them upon her.

Thus they went forth to the gate of the city of Bethulia, and found standing there Ozias and the ancients of the city, Chabris and Charmis. And when they saw her, that her countenance was altered, and her apparel was changed, they wondered at her beauty very greatly, and said unto her,

“The God of our fathers give thee favour, and accomplish thine enterprises to the glory of the children of Israel, and to the exaltation of Jerusalem.”

Then she worshipped God, and said unto them, “Command the gates of the city to be opened unto me, that I may go forth to accomplish the things whereof ye have spoken with me.”

So they commanded the young men to open unto her, as she had spoken. And when they had done so, Judith went out, she and her maid with her; and the men of the city looked after her, until she was gone down the mountain, and till she had passed the valley, and could see her no more.

They went straight forth in the valley and the first watch of the Assyrians met her, and took her, and asked her, "Of what people art thou? Whence comest thou and whither goest thou?"

"I am a woman of the Hebrews, and am fled from them," she said, "for they shall be given you to be consumed. I am coming before Holofernes, the chief captain of your army, to declare words of truth; and I will show him a way whereby he shall go, and win all the hill country, without losing the body or life of any one of his men."

Now when the men heard her words, and beheld her countenance, they wondered greatly at her beauty, and said unto her, "Thou hast saved thy life, in that thou hast hasted to come down to the presence of our lord. Now, therefore, come to his tent, and some of us shall conduct thee until they have delivered thee to his hands. And when thou standest before him, be not afraid in thine heart, but shew unto him according to thy word; and he will entreat thee well."

Then they chose out of them an hundred men to accompany her and her maid; and they brought her to the tent of Holofernes; and there was a concourse throughout all the camp, for her coming was noised among the tents, and they came about her, as she stood without the tent of Holofernes, till they told him of her. And they wondered at her beauty, and admired the children of Israel because of her, and everyone said to his neighbour, "Who would despise this people, that have among them such women? Surely it is not good that one man of them be left, who being let go might deceive the whole earth." And they that lay near Holofernes went out, and all his servants, and they brought her into the tent.

Now Holofernes rested upon his bed under a canopy, which was woven with purple, and gold, and emeralds, and precious stones. So they shewed him of her; and he came out

before his tent with silver lamps going before him. And when Judith was come before him and his servants, they all marvelled at the beauty of her countenance; and she fell down upon her face, and did reverence unto him, and his servants took her up.

Then said Holofernes, "Woman, be of good comfort, fear not in thine heart, for I never hurt any that was willing to serve Nebuchadnezzar, the king of all the earth. Now, therefore, if thy people that dwelleth in the mountains had not set light by me, I would not have lifted up my spear against them, but they have done these things to themselves. Now tell me wherefore thou art fled from them, and art come unto us; if thou art come for safeguard be of good comfort, thou shalt live this night, and hereafter, for none shall hurt thee, but entreat thee well, as they do the servants of king Nebuchadnezzar my lord."

"Receive the words of thy servant," said Judith, "and suffer thine handmaid to speak in thy presence, and I will declare no lie to my lord this night. If thou wilt follow the words of thine handmaid, God will bring the thing perfectly to pass by thee; and my lord shall not fail of his purposes. As Nebuchadnezzar king of all the earth liveth, and as his power liveth, who hath sent thee for the upholding of every living thing; for not only men shall serve him by thee, but also the beasts of the field, and the cattle, and the fowls of the air, shall live by thy power under Nebuchadnezzar and all his house; for we have heard of thy wisdom and thy policies, and it is reported in all the earth that thou only art excellent in all the kingdom, and mighty in knowledge, and wonderful in feats of war. Now as concerning the matter which Achior did speak in thy council we have heard his words, for the men of Bethulia saved him, and he declared unto them all that he had spoken unto thee. Therefore, O lord and governor, reject not his word; but lay it up in thine heart, for it is true;

for our nation shall not be punished, neither can the sword prevail against them, except they sin against their God. And now, that my lord be not defeated and frustrate of his purpose, even death is now fallen upon them, and their sin hath overtaken them, wherewith they will provoke their God to anger, whensoever they shall do wickedness, for their victuals fail them, and all their water is scant, and they have determined to lay hands upon their cattle, and purposed to consume all those things that God hath forbidden them to eat by his laws. And they are resolved to spend the first-fruits of the corn, and the tenths of the wine and oil, which they had sanctified and reserved for the priests that serve in Jerusalem before the face of our God; the which things it is not lawful for any of the people so much as to touch with their hands. And they have sent some to Jerusalem, because they also that dwell there have done the like, to bring them a licence from the senate. Now when they shall bring them word, they will forthwith do it, and they shall be given thee to be destroyed the same day.

“Wherefore I thine handmaid, knowing all this, am fled from their presence; and God hath sent me to work things with thee, whereat all the earth shall be astonished, and whosoever shall hear it; for thy servant is religious, and serveth the God of heaven day and night. Now, therefore, my lord, I will remain with thee, and thy servant will go out by the night into the valley, and I will pray unto God, and he will tell me when they have committed their sins; and I will come and shew it unto thee; then thou shalt go forth with all thine army, and there shall be none of them that shall resist thee. I will lead thee through the midst of Judea, until thou come before Jerusalem; and I will set thy throne in the midst thereof; and thou shalt drive them as sheep that have no shepherd, and a dog shall not so much as open his mouth at thee. These things were told me according to my fore-

knowledge, they were declared unto me, and I am sent to tell thee."

Her words pleased Holofernes and all his servants; and they marvelled at her wisdom, and said, "There is not such a woman from one end of the earth to the other, both for beauty of face and wisdom of words."

Likewise Holofernes said unto her, "God hath done well to send thee before the people, that strength might be in our hands, and destruction upon them that lightly regard my lord. Now thou art both beautiful in thy countenance and witty in thy words; surely if thou do as thou hast spoken, thy God shall be my God, and thou shalt dwell in the house of king Nebuchadnezzar, and shall be renowned through the whole earth."

Then he commanded to bring her where his plate was set; and bade that they should prepare for her of his own meats, and that she should drink of his own wine.

"I will not eat thereof," Judith said, "lest there be an offence, but provision shall be made for me of the things that I have brought."

And Holofernes said, "If thy provision should fail, how should we give thee the like? For there be none with us of thy nation."

"As thy soul liveth, my lord," said Judith, "thine handmaid shall not spend those things that I have before the Lord work by mine hand the things that he hath determined."

Then the servants of Holofernes brought her into the tent, and she slept till midnight, and she arose when it was toward the morning watch, and sent to Holofernes, saying, "Let my lord now command that thine handmaid may go forth unto prayer."

Then Holofernes commanded his guard that they should not stay her. Thus she abode in the camp three days, and went out in the night into the valley of Bethulia, and washed

herself in a fountain of water by the camp. When she came out, she besought the Lord God of Israel to direct her way to the raising up of the children of her people. So she came in clean, and remained in the tent, until she did eat her meat at evening.

In the fourth day Holofernes made a feast to his own servants only, and called none of the officers to the banquet. Then said he to Bagoas the eunuch, who had charge over all that he had, "Go now, and persuade this Hebrew woman which is with thee, that she come unto us, and eat and drink with us. For, lo, it will be a shame for our person if we shall let such a woman go, not having had her company; for if we draw her not unto us, she will laugh us to scorn."

Then went Bagoas from the presence of Holofernes, and came to her, and said, "Let not this fair damsel fear to come to my lord, and to be honoured in his presence, and drink wine, and be merry with us, and be made this day as one of the daughters of the Assyrians, which serve in the house of Nebuchadnezzar."

"Who am I," said Judith, "that I should gainsay my lord? Surely whatsoever pleaseth him I will do speedily, and it shall be my joy unto the day of my death." So she arose, and decked herself with her apparel and all her woman's attire, and her maid went and laid soft skins on the ground for her over against Holofernes, which she had received of Bagoas for her daily use, that she might sit and eat upon them.

Now when Judith came in and sat down, Holofernes's heart was ravished with her, and his mind was moved, and he desired greatly her company; for he waited a time to deceive her from the day that he had seen her. Then said Holofernes, "Drink now, and be merry with us." And Judith said, "I will drink now, my lord, because my life is magnified in me this day more than all the days since I was born." Then she took and ate and drank before him what her

maid had prepared. And Holofernes took great delight in her, and drank much more wine than he had drunk at any time in one day since he was born.

Now when the evening was come, his servants made haste to depart, and Bagoas shut his tent without, and dismissed the waiters from the presence of his lord; and they went to their beds, for they were all weary, because the feast had been long. And Judith was left alone in the tent, and Holofernes lying along upon his bed, for he was filled with wine.

Now Judith had commanded her maid to stand without her bedchamber, and to wait for her coming forth, as she did daily, for she said she would go forth to her prayers, and she spake to Bagoas according to the same purpose. So all went forth, and none was left in the bedchamber, neither little nor great. Then Judith, standing by his bed, said in her heart, "O Lord God of all power, look in this hour upon the works of mine hands for the exaltation of Jerusalem. For now is the time to help thine inheritance, and to execute mine enterprises to the destruction of the enemies which are risen against us."

Then she came to the pillar of the bed, which was at Holofernes's head, and took down his fauchion from thence, and approached to his bed, and took hold of the hair of his head, and said, "Strengthen me, O Lord God of Israel, this day."

And she smote twice upon his neck with all her might, and took away his head from him, and tumbled his body down from the bed, and pulled down the canopy from the pillars; and anon after she went forth, and gave Holofernes's head to her maid; and she put it in her bag of meat. So they twain went together according to their custom unto prayer; and when they passed the camp, they compassed the valley, and went up the mountain of Bethulia, and came to the gates thereof.

Then said Judith afar off to the watchmen at the gate, "Open, open now the gate! God, even our God, is with us, to show his power yet in Jerusalem, and his forces against the enemy, as he hath even done this day." Now when the men of her city heard her voice, they made haste to go down to the gate of their city, and they called the elders of the city; and they ran all together, both small and great, for it was strange unto them that she was come. So they opened the gate, and received them, and made a fire for a light, and stood round about them.

Then she said to them with a loud voice, "Praise, praise God, praise God, I say, for he hath not taken away his mercy from the house of Israel, but hath destroyed our enemies by mine hands this night." So she took the head out of the bag, and shewed it, and said, "Behold the head of Holofernes, the chief captain of the army of Assur, and behold the canopy wherein he did lie in his drunkenness; and the Lord hath smitten him by the hand of a woman. As the Lord liveth who hath kept me in my way that I went, my countenance hath deceived him to his destruction, and yet hath he not committed sin with me, to defile and shame me."

Then all the people were wonderfully astonished, and bowed themselves and worshipped God, and said with one accord, "Blessed be thou, O our God, which hast this day brought to nought the enemies of thy people."

Then said Ozias, "O daughter, blessed art thou of the most high God above all the women upon the earth; and blessed be the Lord God which hath created the heavens and the earth, which hath directed thee to the cutting off of the head of the chief of our enemies; for this thy confidence shall not depart from the heart of men, which remember the power of God for ever. And God turn these things to thee for a perpetual praise, to visit thee in good things, because thou hast not spared thy life for the affliction of our nation, but hast

revenged our ruin, walking a straight way before our God."

And all the people said, "So be it, so be it."

Then said Judith, "Hear me now, my brethren, and take this head, and hang it upon the highest place of your walls. And so soon as the morning shall appear, and the sun shall come forth upon the earth, take ye every one his weapons, and go forth every valiant man out of the city, and set ye a captain over them, as though ye would go down into the plain toward the watch of the Assyrians; but go not down. Then they shall take their armour, and shall go into their camp, and raise up the captains of the army of Assur, and they shall run to the tent of Holofernes, but shall not find him: then fear shall fall upon them, and they shall flee before your face. So ye and all that inhabit the coast of Israel shall pursue them, and overthrow them as they go. But before ye do these things, call me Achior the Ammonite, that he may see and know him that despised the house of Israel, and that sent him to us, as it were to his death."

Then they called Achior out of the house of Ozias; and when he was come, and saw the head of Holofernes in a man's hand in the assembly of the people, he fell down on his face, and his spirit failed. And when they had recovered him, he fell at Judith's feet, and reverenced her and said, "Blessed art thou in all the tabernacle of Juda, and in all nations, which hearing thy name shall be astonished. Now therefore tell me all the things that thou hast done in these days."

Then Judith declared unto him in the midst of the people all that she had done, from the day that she went forth until that hour she spake unto them. When she had left off speaking, the people shouted with a loud voice, and made a joyful noise in their city.

As soon as the morning arose, they hanged the head of Holofernes upon the wall, and every man took his weapons, and they went forth by bands unto the straits of the mountain. But when the Assyrians saw them, they sent to their leaders, which came to their captains and tribunes, and to every one of their rulers. So they came to Holofernes's tent, and said to him that had the charge of all his things, "Waken now our lord: for the slaves have been bold to come down against us to battle, that they may be utterly destroyed."

Then went in Bagoas, and knocked at the door of the tent; for he thought that he had slept with Judith; but because none answered, he opened it, and went into the bedchamber, and found him cast upon the floor dead, and his head was taken from him. Therefore he cried with a loud voice, with weeping, and sighing, and a mighty cry, and rent his garments. After he went into the tent where Judith lodged: and when he found her not, he leaped out to the people, and cried,

"These slaves have dealt treacherously. One woman of the Hebrews hath brought shame upon the house of king Nebuchadnezzar, for, behold, Holofernes lieth upon the ground without a head."

When the captains of the Assyrians' army heard these words, they rent their coats, and their minds were wonderfully troubled, and there was a cry and a very great noise throughout the camp. And when they that were in the tents heard, they were astonished at the thing that was done. Fear and trembling fell upon them, so that there was no man that durst abide in the sight of his neighbour, but rushing out altogether, they fled into every way of the plain, and of the hill country. They also that had camped in the mountains round about Bethulia fled away. Then the children of

Israel, every one that was a warrior among them, rushed out upon them.

Then sent Ozias to all the coasts of Israel such as should tell the things that were done, and that all should rush forth upon their enemies to destroy them. And when the children of Israel heard it, they all fell upon them with one consent and slew them unto Chobai: likewise also they that came from Jerusalem, and from all the hill country (for men had told them what things were done in the camp of their enemies), and they that were in Galaad and in Galilee, chased them with a great slaughter, until they were past Damascus and the borders thereof, and the residue, that dwelt at Bethulia, fell upon the camp of Assur, and spoiled them, and were greatly enriched. And the children of Israel that returned from the slaughter had that which remained; and the villages and the cities, that were in the mountains and in the plain, gat many spoils; for the store was very great.

Then Joacim the high priest, and the ancients of the children of Israel that dwelt in Jerusalem, came to behold the good things that God had shewed to Israel, and to see Judith, and to salute her. And when they came unto her, they blessed her with one accord, and said unto her, "Thou art the exaltation of Jerusalem, thou art the great glory of Israel, thou art the great rejoicing of our nation. Thou hast done all these things by thine hand: thou hast done much good to Israel, and God is pleased therewith. Blessed be thou of the Almighty Lord for evermore."

And all the people said, "So be it."

The people spoiled the camp the space of thirty days; and they gave unto Judith Holofernes's tent, and all his plate, and beds, and vessels, and all his stuff; and she took it, and laid it on her mule, and made ready her carts and laid them thereon. Then all the women of Israel ran together to see her, and blessed her, and made a dance among them for her; and

she took branches in her hand, and gave also to the women that were with her. They put a garland of olive upon her and her maid that was with her, and she went before all the people in the dance leading all the women: and all the men of Israel followed in their armour with garlands, and with songs in their mouths.

APOCRYPHA: JUDITH i. to xv.

